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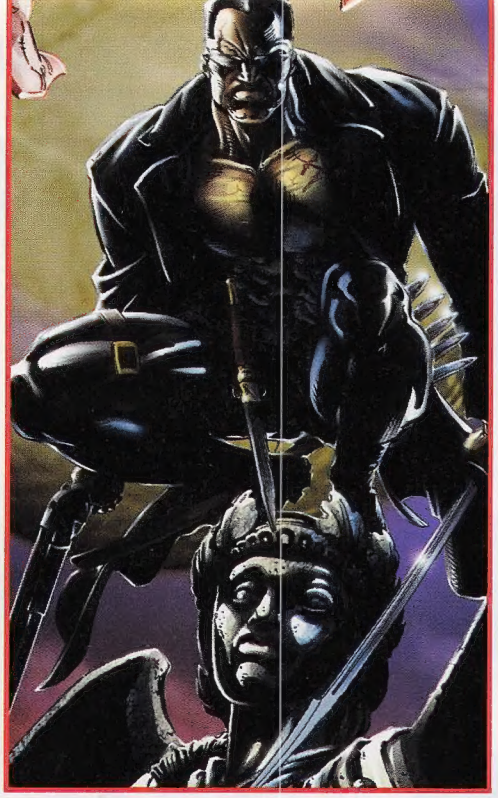
AUGUST

On Sale August 5

- ❑ **Cable #59**
  Ladronn is back!
- ❑ **Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #2**
  Art by Ron Garney!
- ❑ **Daredevil #380**
  By Dan Chichester and Lee Weeks! 48 Pages!
- ❑ **Doctor Who #268**
  The official guide to the phenomenon that is the Doctor!
- ❑ **Essential X-Men Vol. 3**
  UNCANNY X-MEN #145-161 and Annuals #3-5!
- ❑ **Fantastic Four #10**
  Civil War in Genosha!
- ❑ **Hawkeye: Earth's Mightiest Marksman #1**
  Against Batroc and the Taskmaster!
- ❑ **Ka-Zar #18**
  The Savage Landians revolt against Ka-Zar!
- ❑ **Marvel Knights Tour Book**
  Joe Quesada! Jimmy Palmiotti!
- ❑ **Rampaging Hulk #3**
  Who is Ravage(d)?!?
- ❑ **Sensational Spider-Man #32**
  "The Gathering Of The Five"
- ❑ **Spider-Girl #0 MC2**
  1st appearance of Peter Parker's daughter!
- ❑ **Sunfire & Big Hero 6 #2(of 3)**
  An all-out battle against the Everwraith!
- ❑ **Thor #4**
  In the realm of the Sub-Mariner!
- ❑ **Uncanny X-Men #360**
  Who are the all-new, all-deadly X-Men? 48 pages!
- ❑ **X-Men: The Manga #14**
  Trapped on Genosha!



BLADE 48 PAGES
If you're a vampire, he's got a stake in your future!
By Marc "Doctor Strange" Andreyco and Bart Sears

TIME SLIP: THE COMING OF THE AVENGERS 48 PAGES
Earth's Mightiest Heroes as you've never seen them before!
By Jim "Foot Soldiers" Krueger and Matt "Starman" Smith

On Sale August 12

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  What hides in the fog?
- ❑ **The Amazing Spider-Man #440**
  "The Gathering Of The Five"
- ❑ **Generation X #43**
  Vengeance against Emma Frost!
- ❑ **Iron Man #9**
  Tony Stark must face his greatest enemy... but who is it?
- ❑ **Marvel Adventures #19**
  Starring the Avengers!
- ❑ **Marvel Universe #5**
  Our only hope is the Monster Hunters!
- ❑ **Mutant X #1**
  48 Pgs! Havoc must prove to the X-Men that he's as evil as they are! By Howard Mackie and Tom Raney!
- ❑ **Silver Surfer #144**
  Jon J. Muth is back!
- ❑ **Spider-Girl #1 MC2**
  Her Amazing adventures begin!
- ❑ **Spider-Man: The Manga #20**
  Nominated for a Harvey Award!
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  "American Nightmare" part 2 by Mark Waid and Andy Kubert!
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  48-page last issue! The Wedding of Captain Britain!
- ❑ **Heroes For Hire #16**
  "The Siege Of Wundagore"
- ❑ **Incredible Hulk #469**
  Written by Joe "Cable" Casey!
- ❑ **Peter Parker: Spider-Man #96**
  "The Gathering Of The Five"
- ❑ **Peter Parker: Spider-Man/Elektra '98**
  Art by Joyce Chin!
- ❑ **Strange Tales #2**
  Featuring Man-Thing and Werewolf By Night!
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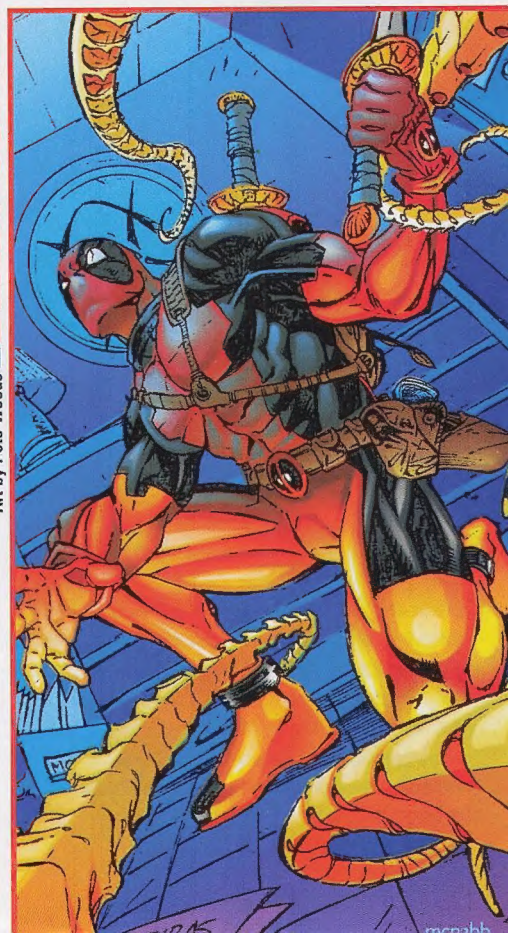
  Wizard's "Create A Villain" contest winner!
- ❑ **What If? #113**
  What If Tony Stark became the Master Of The Mystic Arts?
- ❑ **X-Man #43**
  Is Nate a murderer?
- ❑ **X-Men #80**
  The return of Colossus, Nightcrawler and Shadowcat to the team! 48 pages!
- ❑ **X-Men Manga #15**
  The X-Mansion destroyed!

On Sale August 26

- ❑ **Avengers #9**
  Moses Magnum is back!
- ❑ **Conan: The Return Of Styrm #2(of 3)**
  Who is the dragon named Styrm really?
- ❑ **J2 #1 MC2**
  The son of Juggernaut!
- ❑ **Marvel #5**
  The official all-new, all-different Marvel catalogue!
- ❑ **Nighthawk #2(of 3)**
  Nighthawk and Daredevil trapped in Mephisto's realm!
- ❑ **Quicksilver #12**
  The Siege Of Wundagore continues...
- ❑ **Heroes For Hire/Quicksilver '98**
  The conclusion of "The Siege Of Wundagore!"
- ❑ **Shadows & Light #4**
  Featuring Wolverine, Morbius and the Punisher!
- ❑ **Silver Surfer #145**
  Now Bi-Weekly! Art by Muth!
- ❑ **Spectacular Spider-Man #262**
  "The Gathering Of The Five"
- ❑ **Spider-Man:The Manga #21**
  The conclusion to the Vietnam Saga!
- ❑ **Wolverine #129**
  The return of Wendigo!
- ❑ **X-Force #82**
  Now drawn by Jimmy Cheung!

DEADPOOL#2!
22 PAGES
The "Dead Reckoning" countdown begins!
Written by Joe "X-Men" Kelly and James Felder
Art by Pete Woods



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THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 85 • SEPTEMBER 1998

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46 THE WIZARD Q&A: CHRIS CLAREMONT
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52 GALACTUS EATS WIZARD
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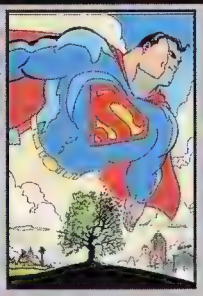
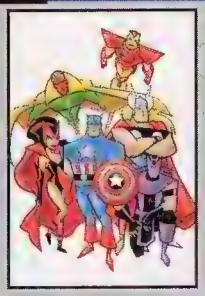
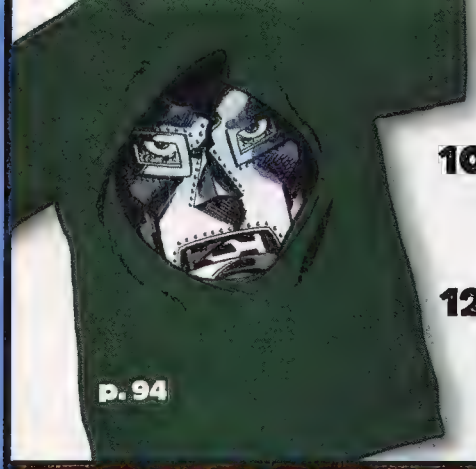




Superman For All Seasons (left) was illustrated by Tim Sale and colored by Bjärne Hansen. Fly to **"Wizard News"** to see how the Man of Tomorrow stacks up against the Superman of Yesteryear. **Animated Avengers** was illustrated by Rick Burchett and colored by Brimstone. To get the lowdown on next season's biggest animated series, tune in to our fall animation preview on **page 76**. **Wolverine/Superman** was illustrated by Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Check out **page 58** to see how these two heroes contributed to the 25 greatest moments in comics.



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Design your own X-Men and take home a killer Wolverine Unmasked cold-cast statue, *The Essential X-Men* #1 and #2, the *X-Men: The Ravages of Apocalypse* total *Quake* conversion PC CD-ROM game, and more!

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Show us your finest penmanship and you can walk away with a limited-edition, framed "Spawn" animation cel signed by Spawn creator Todd McFarlane!

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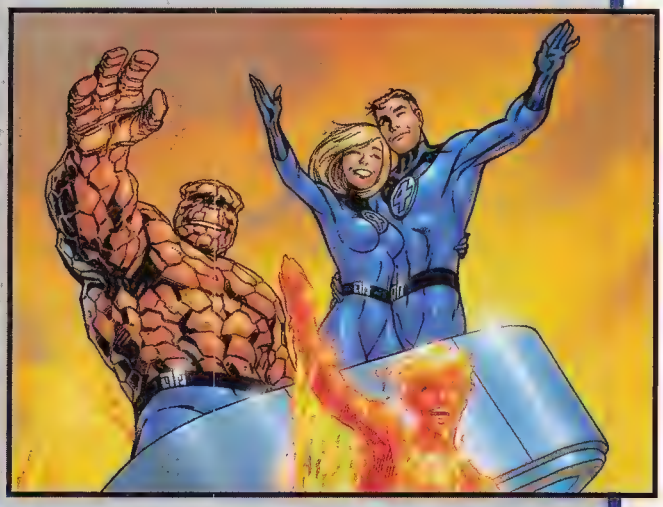
EXCLUSIVE OFFER

COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

It's clobberin' time! Oh yeah, here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Fantastic Four* #1/2 comic featuring a funky in-continuity Mole Man story that picks up right after *FF* (vol. 3) #1, by Ralph Macchio and Ron Lim! Fource yourself over to **page 80**.



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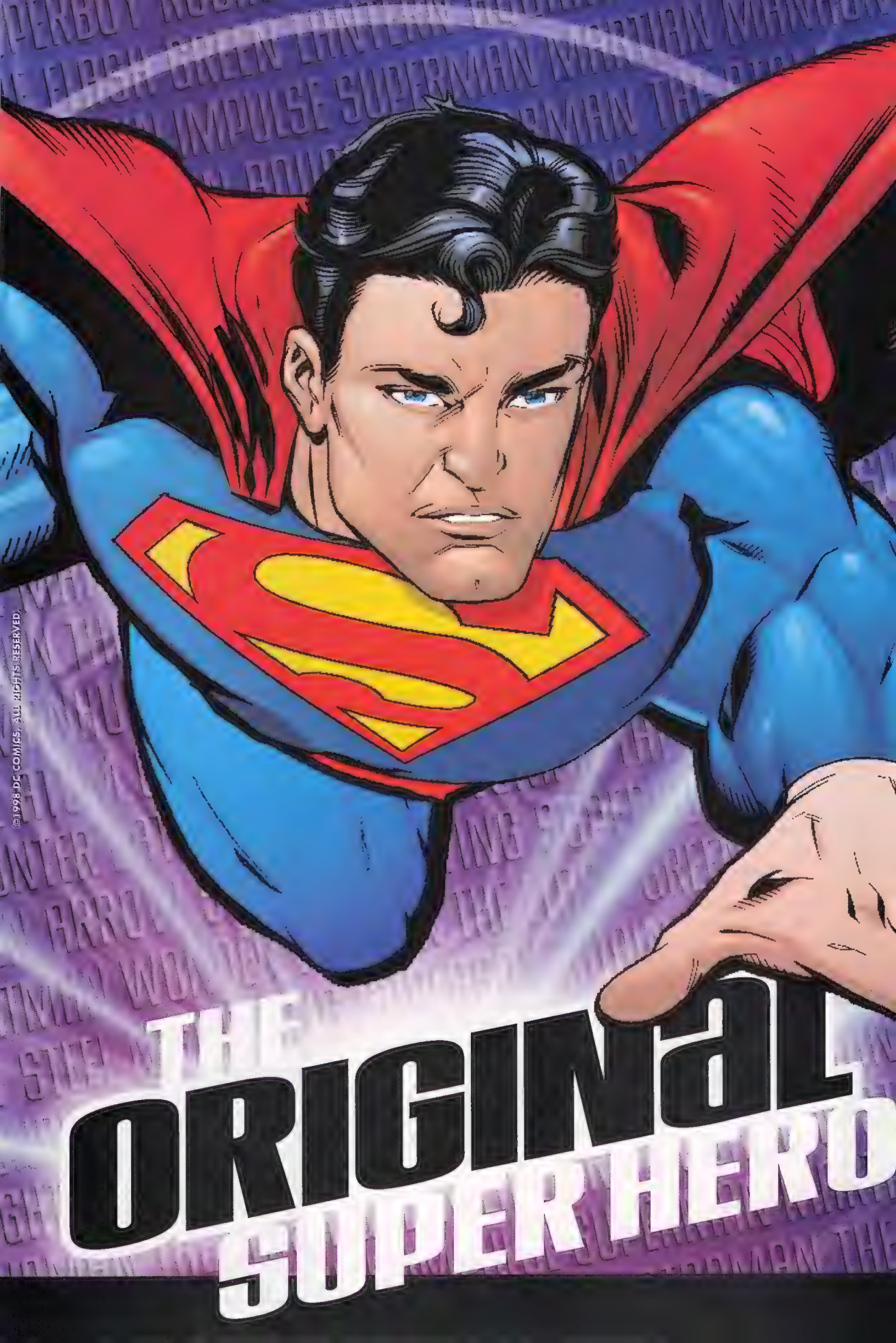
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"EVERYBODY WAS KUNG-FU FIGHTING!"

MEDIA BLITZ

The comic book industry is hot, and interest in comic book characters is higher than it's been in years. This month kicks off our third and final installment of "comics are cool," focusing on comics in the mainstream.

I'm seeing more and more characters popping up in different forms of media. Casting directors are hoping fans will buy Tom Cruise as Iron Man, Nic Cage as Superman, Will Smith as the Mark (based on a Rob Liefeld story), Leonardo DiCaprio as Spider-Man and, of course, Wesley Snipes as Blade. Another trend is that comic book writers and artists are starting to develop characters directly into video games—like Top Cow is doing with Eidos—or into movies like Jeph Loeb and Joe Madureira are doing with Nickelodeon.

With many of today's most popular characters in development in other media, there definitely won't be a shortage of your favorite characters hitting the movies, TV or video games. And let's not forget toys...you will certainly see all your favorite characters as toys.

Make sure you check out "Coming Attractions" every month for the latest development in movie and TV news. And this month, we have a great preview of next season's animated TV series.

In this month's *Wizard*, you'll find some great stuff. There's the 25 Greatest Moments in comic book history. Wait until you see what we picked as the greatest moment. We've also got a Q&A with former X-Men writer Chris Claremont, who is back at Marvel now. We spend some time with up-and-coming *Hulk* and *Cable* writer Joe Casey, and take on Galactus in a photo feature. I'd put my money on the *Wizard* staff.

See Ya!

Gareb S. Shamus

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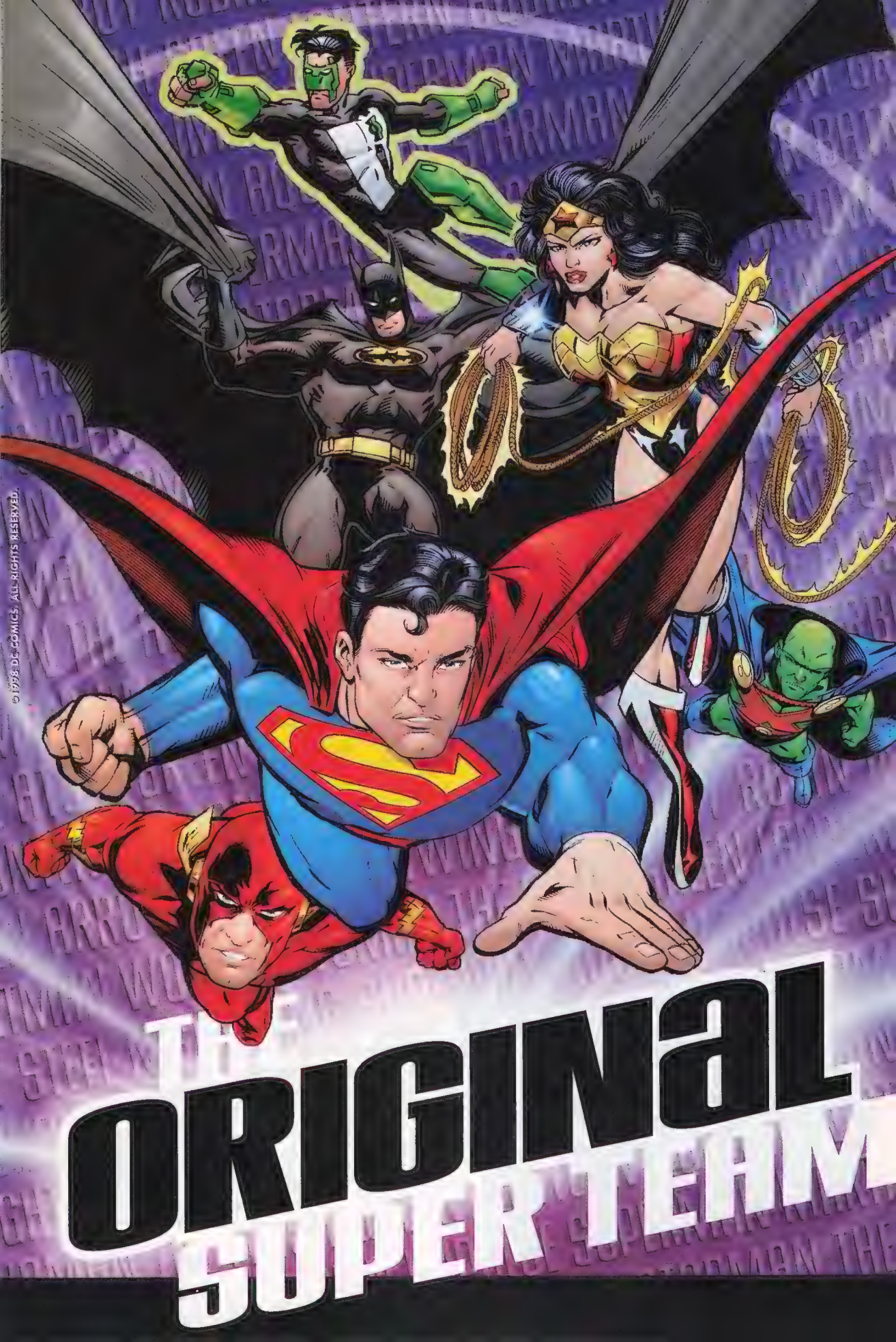

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MAGIC WORDS

MORE "HIDDEN ALEX ROSS!" LEINIL YU'S SECRET ORIGIN... ...AND ASS-SNAPPING TOWELS!

The Magazine Association of America requires that, at least once a year, I actually do something socially redeeming with this column to prove that it's more than just acerbic wit and nasty comments. So we lead off with nice stuff this month, such as helping people in scholarly pursuit. Those of you who *like* acerbic wit and nasty comments? No worries—we'll have some of that, too. Just read on.

Hi,

I read Peter Ryan's letter (*Wizard* #82, "Magic Words") about getting comics into libraries and I'd like to throw my two cents' worth in.

I'm a librarian and I order as many comics and graphic novels as I can. Perhaps librarians would order more if publishers of graphic novels would submit them for review. Many times the distribution companies that service libraries don't carry them. I would hope that everyone would speak to their local librarians about ordering graphic novels. After all, your taxes pay for the books in the library—they ought to have what you want to read!

Most libraries that carry graphic novels and comic art keep the books in the "young adult" section. But in my library we keep 'em in the art room. If you're ever in Bayonne, come check out our collection!

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***¡Bueno!* So the word goes out again: Let your library know you'd like a comic or two on the shelves and maybe you'll get some. And hey, you publishers! It never hurts to send a catalog down the library path either.**

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

Hi! You've probably received many letters from kids like me who need to write to a business for an English assignment. And of course you know that we get a better grade if we get a response to the letter. So I won't mention that. But whatever happened to *Creed*, the kooky comic with the kid who entered that bizarre dream-world? In my opinion it was an amazingly innovative concept that promised a lot.

Chris Stoots
Lewistown, MT

Trent Kaniuga, the writer/artist who started up *Creed* at the tender age of 16, says, "*Creed* is taking a break. I'm currently working on *The Drywall and Oswald Show* from Fireman Press, which is a bimonthly that just started in June. Expect *Creed* to be on the shelf again sometime in 1999."

And Trent and I both hope you get an "A."

Dear Jim,

Have you ever seen the inside back cover of *Batman: Black and White #3*? The Batman drawing by Marc Silvestri was probably the best thing he ever drew! Did Silvestri ever do anything else with Batman? If not, could you throw your incredible weight around and convince him to?

Josh Brody
STPFreak21@aol.com

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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

I have some personal questions.

1) Did you feel proud when you stole Jim Lee's bathrobe at the 1996 San Diego Comic Con?

2) Would you do it again?

3) My little brother asks if he can have the robe. You can probably swipe another.

4) I saw copy editor Greg Orlando in *Wizard* #80's "One of the Damned." Don't you think he's creepy-looking? I know I do! I once woke up in a cold sweat thinking about those evil beady eyes of his!

5) Who do you think would win in a fight: Orlando the nerd, or you?

Claurio Gonzalez
Milwaukee, WI

P.S. I despise Greg Orlando.

I have some personal answers.

1) Damn straight! And we were even *more* proud when we lifted his robe at the '97 San Diego Con. That theft required a three-man team effort and a lot of sneakiness. You can read all the gory details in "Bullpen" in *Wizard* #74.

2) Nah. The whole robe deal is getting a bit *passé*. This year, we steal his underwear. Or his woman. Or both.

3) Tell him he can. I feel secure that we can steal whatever we want from Jim Lee at will, so the '96 robe is on its way to Milwaukee.

4) Greg may be a bit toad-like and shifty, but I don't think he's all *that* creepy-looking. And on a related note, if you find yourself dreaming of Greg Orlando, might I suggest you evaluate where your life is going?

5) I hope it never comes to that. But since Greg is very fragile and weighs a mere 87 pounds soaking wet, only one answer is possible: I'd mop the floor with the little twerp.

P.S. Greg's really not that bad once you get to know him. Heck, he's almost human.

Silvestri hasn't done any other Batman work, but he soon will. Top Cow and DC are planning a Batman/Darkness project (see "Wizard News" in this very issue) for early 1999 release.

And my weight's not *that* incredible. I only go about 220 pounds. Over a 6-foot frame, that doesn't make me *too* fat.

Dear Wizard,

In *Wizard* #80, I saw an Awesome Entertainment ad for a comic called *Blast*, created by Jeph Loeb and Joe Madureira. Could you give some information about when it's coming out and if Madureira is going to create more comics for Awesome, Cliffhanger or anyone else?

Roland Nanna
Nanna5@aol.com

Blast, a character Loeb and Joe Mad created for a Nickelodeon movie, is in comic limbo. "Awesome was going to do a comic adaptation," Madureira says, "but since they've hit financial difficulties, no comic will be coming from Awesome or anyone else right now. We're going to wait until we get closer to the movie release date and see what happens. In the meantime, I'm working on *Battle Chasers* and nothing else."

Speaking o' which...

Dear Wizard,

I know that Joe Madureira pumps out a 22-page *Battle Chasers* book every month, but how long does it take for him to pencil a page? Can he do a page in a day? Two a day?

Also, I heard that making it into the comics biz is like trying to get on a pro football team! Is that true?

Chris Palmer
epalme1@ibm.net

Joe, who points out that *Battle Chasers* is actually on a five-week schedule and comes out 10 times a year, says, "It depends on what's on the page. I've done single-character splash pages that only take a few hours. But detailed, multi-character pages can take forever. I've spent two or three days on some single pages. All in all, I average about a page a day, which is the artists' standard."

And yes—comics is like football. Steroid use runs rampant and people are constantly snapping your ass with towels in the comic book locker room.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin:

I was watching "The Superman Adventures" cartoon with my brother this afternoon when something caught our eyes. At the funeral scene at the end of the "Apokolips...Now" episode, my bro' thought he saw a long-haired, goateed man. Then I spotted an elderly, bearded, white-haired man. Could this be Alex Ross and Norman Ross, the painter of *Kingdom Come* and his dad (the basis for Norman McCay), respectively? If so, it really turns the tables, as Alex is always slipping something shifty into his work.

Stephan Dukofsky
Riverdale, NY
JorEL845@aol.com

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address on page <TK> (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

Consider those tables turned. Ross and Ross do appear, and it's largely just through blind luck.

The funeral is for Dan Turpin, a Metropolis cop whose visual appearance in the cartoon is based on legendary comic creator Jack Kirby. Producers Paul Dini and Bruce Timm slipped a bunch of cameo appearances into the funeral, including the Rosses, Warner Bros. staffers, and even a bunch of Kirby-created characters (Including Marvel characters!) such as the Fantastic Four, Nick Fury and the Black Panther. The only problem? When the episode was shipped overseas to be animated, many of the specific background characters were replaced by general background shots. The scene was re-shot, but most of the planned cameos remained obscured. By sheer luck—or maybe divine intervention, since Norman Ross is a Protestant minister—the *Kingdom Come* pair earned the clearest, most open shot.

Dear Wizard,

Is DC going to publish the four extra *Kingdom Come* pages and eight-page epilogue as a comic so I don't have to buy the whole paperback edition?

Gabriel Friedland
Los Angeles, CA

DC hasn't ruled it out, but it looks unlikely. It appears doubtful to Alex Ross, too. The paperback retails for $14.95 and Ross says, "I think we made the collected edition worthwhile with enough additional material, including 12 extra pages, poster art, trading card art and concept sketches. It's worth it to read the whole thing in paperback."

Psst! The four *Kingdom Come* issues, straight off the racks, would have cost you $19.80 and contained *none* of the extra goodies, making the paperback a pretty durned decent value.

Dear Jim McLauchlin,

In "Storm Watch," the tour of WildStorm Productions in *Wizard* #81, you show Brandon Choi checking out the reference book *Cause of Death: A Writer's Guide to Death, Murder & Forensic Medicine.* This sounds like a cool book I'd like to track down, but I can't make out the author's or publisher's name. Can you help? Also, does Brandon recommend any other reference manuals for aspiring comic writers?

Robert Wicks
Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, Canada
wicksr@morgan.ucs.mun.ca

Brandon, who's currently writing *Gen*[12], tells us that Keith D. Wilson, M.D., wrote the tome, which

JULIE ROGERS
Age: 21 Sex: Female
200 W. Orchard St.
Clute, TX 77531
Likes: X-titles, *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron*

ALAN STEADMAN
Age: 13 Sex: Male
1631 N.W. 122nd Ave.
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026
Likes: *The Darkness, Weapon Zero, Witchblade*

JASON LOVE
Age: 14 Sex: Male
3012 Ethel Ave.
Waco, TX 76707
Likes: Spider titles, X-titles, *Hulk*

JAMES GILLETTE
Age: 18 Sex: Male
11850 E. Whittier Blvd.
Whittier, CA 90601
Likes: *What If...?*, X-titles, *Silver Surfer*

DARYL JONES
Age: 16 Sex: Male
4816 New Hampshire Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20011
Likes: Storm, X-Men, Amalgam

EDWARD SHERMAN
Age: 22 Sex: Male
Box A, Apt. 118
Fort Knox, KY 40121
Likes: collecting comics

RACHEL A. HUMPHREY
Age: 12 Sex: Female
18309 W. Anderson Rd.
Sand Springs, OK 74063
Likes: *Robotech, Sailor Moon,* anime

is published by Writer's Digest Books. "And it's part of a series of useful references called the 'How Done It' series." Brandon also recommends Writer's Digest's *Police Procedural: A Writer's Guide to the Police and How They Work*; *Deadly Doses: A Writer's Guide to Poisons*; and *Armed and Dangerous: A Writer's Guide to Weapons*. Choi also assures us he uses these books for reference only, and not recreation.

Dear Wizard,

In *Uncanny X-Men* #129, Dazzler refers to the Hellfire Club's armored attack squad as "refugees from *Starship Troopers*." Did the concept for the "Starship Troopers" movie come from this issue, or is it just coincidence that this became the title for the movie? If you can answer this, thanks.

James Marston
pez1@bellsouth.net

Oh, I can answer this.

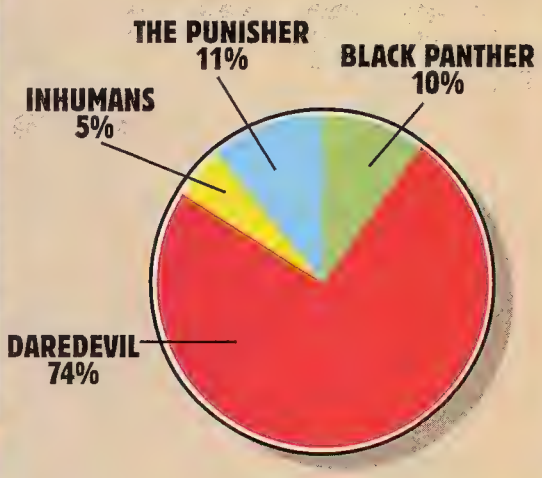
***Starship Troopers* originated as a "book" by noted science-fiction author Robert A. Heinlein, published way back in 1959. A "book," for those of you unfamiliar with the concept, is (according to the ol' *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*) "any number of written or printed sheets bound together." Dazzler, being a well-read heroine, is probably familiar with many of these strange and wondrous volumes, and thus was able to make this reference. Were she here right now, ol' Dazz would probably inform you that many movies actually start out as these "books," and that "books" are our friends. You should read one today.**

You're welcome.

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHICH "MARVEL KNIGHTS" BOOK DO YOU WANNA READ MOST?



Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti introduce "Marvel Knights," a new Marvel editorial line with four books under their control, in September.

But which book will be the most popular? "*Daredevil*, because, to comic fans, Kevin Smith is a god," said one respondent. "He makes comics popular in mainstream capacities by talking about comics in his movies...now he's writing the comics he talked about. Who isn't excited about that?"

Obviously not that many people, because even the fans who voted for other titles drooled over Smith's upcoming *Daredevil* as a close second. "I figure everyone [will] vote for *Daredevil*, so I'll say *Punisher*," one fan detailed in his e-mail. "While it's neat to see Quesada, Palmiotti and even Wrightson doing a Marvel book, Kevin Smith was the true factor in this poll."

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

I was checking out an old issue of *Wizard* (#50, to be exact) and saw a picture of The Crow in "Drawing Board." I didn't pay it much mind until I saw who drew it: Leinil Yu, the current penciler of *Wolverine*. I couldn't believe it! My jaw literally dropped!

How did Yu get discovered and wind up at Marvel? And does he still live in the Philippines?

Mike Capprotti
Philadelphia, PA
Apacheboy1@aol.com

Yu says his "Drawing Board" entries (he won several times) helped. He also says, "Whilce Portacio, my mentor and a fellow Filipino artist, bombarded editors with some work of mine he brought to the States. Luckily, Marvel liked what they saw and gave me a shot on *Wolverine*.

"I work at home in Las Pinas, Metro Manila, Philippines, in front of my TV and beside my computer and PlayStation. It's a miracle that I get any work done."

And Yu is hardly the only artist to get his start through *Wizard*. Tim Townsend (*Uncanny X-Men* inker), Jeff Matsuda (soon-to-be *Wolverine* artist), and Frank Cho (of the syndicated comic strip "Liberty Meadows") were all *Wizard* art contest winners, proving once again that *Wizard* can be your stairway to stardom.

Now all you guys I just listed—send me a dollar!

Dear Jim,

Who drew the *Generation X Underground Special*? And has he drawn any comics other than that one?

Edmund R. Hall
MAX24227@aol.com

The guy is Jim Mahfood. In addition to the self-published *Cosmic Toast*, Mahfood has done "Zombie Kid" stories in *Oni Double Feature* #5-#6 and the *Clerks* one-shot (featuring characters from the Kevin Smith

BRIAN P. POTTER
Age: 22 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 16238
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-6238
Likes: *The Darkness, Witchblade, Divine Right*

MIKE HOUGHTON
Age: 17 Sex: Male
H.C. 61, Box 167
Rainelle, WV 25962
Likes: *Witchblade, Fantastic Four, Iron Man*

STEPHEN ALGERA
Age: 13 Sex: Male
64 Megna Ct., Hamilton,
Ontario, L9C-6Y8 Canada
Likes: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Hitman, CyberFrog*

EMILY MARTIN
Age: 16 Sex: Female
891 Woodhaven Dr.
Mobile, AL 36608-9703
Likes: *Gen13, Bone*, anime

ANTHONY GIDI
Age: 12 Sex: Male
128 Myrtle St.
Ashland, MA 01721
Likes: *Calvin and Hobbes, X-Men, Spider Man*

TWAN CARTER
Age: 31 Sex: Male
200380 Coffeewood Dr., #6A
Mitchells, VA 22729
Likes: *Sailor Moon, Vampirella, Shi*

ROBYN CULOTTA
Age: 20 Sex: Female
15203 Rose Cottage
Houston, TX 77069
Likes: X-titles, *Strangers in Paradise, Kabuki*

This summer,
terror won't be taking
a vacation.
JAMIE LEE CURTIS
H20
HALLOWEEN
TWENTY YEARS LATER
ADAM ARKIN
MICHELLE WILLIAMS
ADAM HANN-BYRD
JODI LYNN O'KEEFE
JOSH HARTNETT
L.L. COOL J
JOSEPH GORDON LEVITT
DIMENSION FILMS
MOUSTAPHA AKKAD
NIGHTFALL
STEVE MINER
JAMIE LEE CURTIS "HALLOWEEN H20" ADAM ARKIN MICHELLE WILLIAMS ADAM HANN-BYRD JODI LYN O'KEEFE JANET LEIGH
JOSH HARTNETT
L.L. COOL J
JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT
ED GERRARD
JOHN OTTMAN
ROSS BROWN
CHRISTINE SHEAKS
DEBORAH EVERTON
MALEK AKKAD
JOHN CARPENTER
PATRICK LUSSIER
JOHN WILLET
DARYN OKADA
MOUSTAPHA AKKAD
BOB WEINSTEIN HARVEY WEINSTEIN CARY GRANAT
PAUL FREEMAN
ROBERT ZAPPIA
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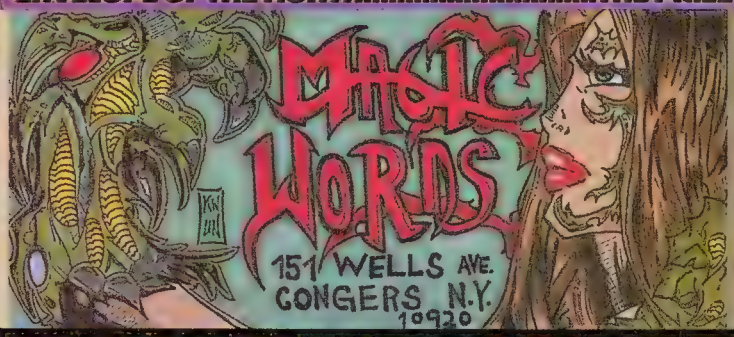
LETTER ART

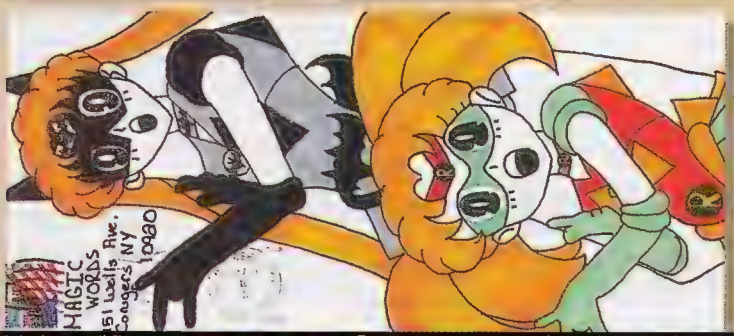
Each fan who has letter art printed this month will receive a copy of *The Tenth* #9 autographed by creator Tony Daniel, plus he'll win a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope also scores an original page of *The Tenth* art by Daniel. This page, intended for issue #9, has never before been seen! (Thanks for the swag, Tony!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of your envelope. Good Luck!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

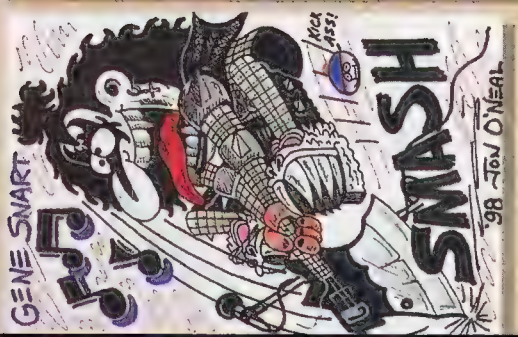


THE WITCHBLADE Eric Kwun Rowland Heights., CA

WOLVERINE VS. FREDDY Benny G. Leal Navasota, TX



SAILOR MOON & RENNÉ Maureen Maher Philadelphia, PA



GENE SIMMONS Jon O'Neal Campbell, MO

movie) for Oni Press. Mahfood hopes his future holds "another one-shot special at Marvel, and hopefully more stuff with Kevin, both of which are in the talking stages right now."

Dear Jim,
What does "superkalifragalisticexpialodocious" mean?

Chris Curley
Hammond, NY

It means, "stupid little dog that sits on the front porch."

Dear Jim,
One of my all-time favorite comics is *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*. What comic character should fight Mike Tyson?

Jesse Brooks
Brentwood, CA

Methinks Herr Starr from *Preacher* might be a good choice. Since he's only got one ear to start with, he'd probably give Iron Mike fits.

Dear Wizard,
I'll fight anyone who disagrees with me.

Hunter Breckenridge
Kansas City, MO

Okay. I disagree with your position on supply-side economics. I also think you're stupid, you're wearing an ugly shirt and your standards of personal hygiene aren't exactly up to par.

Now if you're not too chicken, I'll meet you after school, right under the flagpole. Oh, yeah—and bring a paper bag to carry your teeth home in.

Oops. Looks like I overshot "acerbic wit" and went straight into "gratuitous violence." That's what deadlines can do to ya. Time to hit the showers. No fair snappin' a towel at my ass. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

When they made Jim McLauchlin, they broke the mold—and then they tried to break Jim, but he was too fast for 'em.

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Congers, NY 10920
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EMERALD CITY

With fans clamoring for Hal Jordan's return, will DC add another 'Green Lantern' title?

For a dead guy, Hal Jordan sure gets around.

Since May, the former Green Lantern has appeared twice a month in the "Emerald Knights" story arc in *Green Lantern*. He's starred in at least four other titles, too, most notably *Legends of the DC Universe* and *JLA: Year One*.

For hard-core fans of the hero who died two years ago—such as the 2,500-plus petition-signers of Hal's Emerald Advancement Team (H.E.A.T.)—this is a dream come true. And it's been great for DC, too: although the title has always been a solid seller, sales shot up 75 percent (due mainly to Hal's return) when *GL* #100 hit the stands in May. And the company has gone into a second printing on the sold-out issue.

So with Hal in the lucrative limelight and a corps of rabid fans drooling for more, it looks like everything's set for DC to launch a second solo *GL* title—with Hal at the helm.

But don't bet on it.

Although *GL* writer Ron Marz and editor Kevin Dooley have said the *GL* team has informally chatted about doing a second title—not with Hal, however—they insist there are no current plans to launch one, not even with the current success.

"We've discussed it in the very general terms of, 'Is this something we want to think about?' and there was a lot of shoulder shrugging," Marz said. "At this point, it's not something that's going to happen."

But if fans can cough up the green, why won't DC cough up Green Lantern? According to DC Executive Director Mike Carlin, the appearance of Hal in the "Knights" story arc would lose its power if it were repeated on a regular basis. In Carlin's opinion, Hal was "a fairly blank slate as a character," and *GL* was "a lackluster series for a long while." The decision to shake things up in 1994 was made to boost sales, Carlin said.

"The bottom line is if we brought [Hal] back, we'd please people for a month or two, but then we might fall right back into the same area that we were in before," Carlin said. "We can say, 'Let's make sure we don't,' but then again, we always do that. We always set out to make something interesting and we don't always succeed."

Marz has expressed some interest in writing a second book, despite DC's Hal-less plans. Given an appropriately cool catalyst to launch it, a second book could provide a platform to tell more GL stories, Marz said. And an ongoing Kyle Rayner (the current GL) storyline from book to book—à la *Legionnaires* and *Legion Of Super-Heroes*—with the occasional Hal flashback could be fun, he said.

But in spite of the controversy, the high sales and a June *Wizard* fan poll showing 49 percent of participants saw Hal as the better Green Lantern, chances of a second book are remote. The reason why fans are cheering when Hal returned

is because DC took him away in the first place, Carlin said.

"The thing is, if something becomes run-of-the-mill, it's not something that generates interest and sales and even controversy," he said. "As creators of stories, we have to reserve the right to tell an unhappy ending. Hal Jordan has had an unhappy ending. It doesn't diminish his contributions. It's just the ending."

DC's stance may have a sour ring for Hal fans, but it's obvious the six-part, twice-monthly "Knights" storyline has been very successful for the company. And though the biweekly format can be seen as a testing ground for two *GL* titles, it wasn't envisioned that way, Marz said. He pitched it as a special occasion, nothing more. Dooley took the bait.

"['Knights'] was one of those stories we wanted to tell very quickly," Dooley said. "We went biweekly so we could give readers what they wanted, so they didn't have to wait six months to see how it all turns out."

But the "Knights" story isn't the only thing on the stands that should please Hal fans, Dooley said. He'll be appearing in a hardback adventure titled *Fear Itself*, and *Barry and Hal*, a Flash-Lantern "Year One"-style six-parter written by Mark Waid and Tom Peyer. Both should be released by the end of 1998.

"I'm not saying a second title's a bad idea," Dooley said, "but the core title is fine. It's strong. We have a bunch of little projects to keep on supporting the core monthly book. But we're doing something rather radical in issues #107-#111. We'll see if [the readers] are still with us after that."

Dooley refused to say any more.

So what about the fate of Hal Jordan in "Emerald Knights?" If DC isn't committing to a Hal title, what's going to happen to him?

"The best we can hope for now with Hal—which changes every minute in this business—is we'll use him a lot in *Legends in the DC Universe*, and in mini-series like the Green Lantern/Flash thing," Carlin said. "I think the reality of another book with another Green Lantern in it depends on how popular this book stays when Hal's *not* in it." ■ CHRIS HUTCHINS

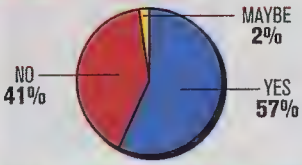
HAL STORM Despite the success of his appearance in *GL*, DC would prefer to keep Hal Jordan (opposite) buried.

SEEINGGREEN

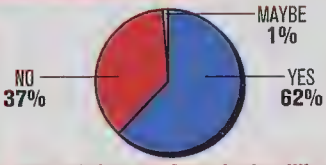
SURVEY SAYS...

Is there *really* support for Hal on his own? A *Wizard* online poll indicates there just might be:

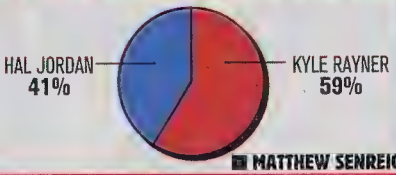
Would you buy *two* current-continuity *Green Lantern* titles?



Would you support a second *Green Lantern* title if it was a "Legends of Hal Jordan" theme and *not* a current-continuity series?



If you could only buy one *Green Lantern* title, would you buy a Hal Jordan book or a Kyle Rayner book?



■ MATTHEW SENREICH

Cute chick spotted at local comic con. "Yep, it's pretty well frozen solid," Satan later commented at area press conference.

Local fan finds costume idea looked better on paper. "My mom made it," said easy target before being stuffed into a locker.

Comic con attendee thinks repeating TV dialogue is entertaining to others. "D'oh!" exclaimed nuisance before having his money refunded and being pushed into the street.

DEADPOOL MONTH HITS IN OCTOBER

Deadpool writer Joe Kelly has a problem. "The people who know Deadpool seem to like him," Kelly said. "But not *enough* people know. He's gotta sing, he's gotta dance, he's gotta give you an itch in your pants."

Marvel Comics is hoping people start itching in October with "Deadpool Month," a celebration of the humorous, motor-mouthed mercenary. On the serious side, October's *Deadpool* #23 is double-sized, and kicks off a three-issue storyline that climaxes in another double-sized #25.

"It pretty much wraps up everything we've been building for two years," Kelly said. *The Encyclopedia Deadpoolica,* featuring tons of facts and figures, also ships in October, and October's *Wizard* #87 will contain an original, exclusive *Deadpool* #0, which ties into the three-part anniversary story.

Then the goofball stuff starts. October also sees the *Deadpool Team-Up Starring Deadpool and Widdle Wade* one-shot, a cute tale of Wade Wilson when he was just a young 'un that Kelly *swore* is a story in Deadpool continuity. *Baby's First Deadpool Book* also hits the same month. "It's an activity book with a tongue-in-cheek, black comedy Deadpool spin," he said. "There's sick, twisted, demented fairy tales, games and activity book stuff that should be fun for the whole dysfunctional family."

And merchandise? That's not a boat to be missed. "There will be a Randy Bowen Deadpool bust that I'm not sculpting, since Randy Bowen is already sculpting it," Kelly remarked. "It's all part of our big Deadpool media blitz. If this doesn't work, I'll just...I'll just try again next year with even goofier stuff, I guess."

Sounds like a plan. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

POOL OF BLOOD Got life insurance? Good.

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

THY 'KINGDOM' COMES? Rumor has it DC Comics is taking a big step toward making *Kingdom Come* the "official" DC future with a "Kingdom Week" in December. A tentative plan calls for somewhere between five and nine Kingdom-related one-shots, *all* written by *KC* scribe Mark Waid.

BAT-TEAMS ASSEMBLE! Word trickles slowly out of Gotham City, but we hear penciler Mike Deodato Jr. (*Lady Death*) will be part of the massive creative changes associated with 1999's "No Man's Land" Bat-storyline.

'JLA' GAINS TIME! Never a team to stand pat, it's lookin' like DC's high-powered JLA is shuffling its lineup once again. Spies tell us that Hourman will be joining the squad in late '98. No word yet on if anyone leaves, though...

ROBINSON

'STARMAN' SPINOFF! Big changes are coming down the pike in *Starman.* And we hear writer James Robinson is looking to make current Starman Jack Knight a part of a new *Justice Society of America* ongoing he would write.

NEW PAGES=BIG SALES! Early word out of Top Cow is that Michael Turner's *Fathom* #1, featuring "alternate interiors" with different pages in three different editions, sold an amazing 250,000 copies. Another early word is that Marvel would like to repeat that success. It may go to "alternate interiors" soon on select books.

BOOK IT! We hear that one of the many Mighty Marvel projects for the new millennium is a new and updated *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe.* No word on a new *Who's Who* DC encyclopedia, but an update there sure would be nice, too...

oops!

In *Wizard* #83, WildStorm Productions should have been listed as one of four publishers to place three titles in the top 30 monthly sellers.

In *Wizard* #84's "Company Updates," Thorby Comics was misidentified. We apologize for the error.

ROBINSON PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA

we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

POR•TA•CI•O (por **TAY** see oh), Whilce; proper noun. 1963-present; **1** Comic artist who rose to prominence on *X-Factor* and *Uncanny X-Men* in the early 1990s **2** Co-founder of Avalon Studios, a new branch of Image Comics, and co-creator of *Stone,* Avalon's first title **3** weird Italian mushroom-flavored frozen yogurt

THE GAMBIT WATCH

The seven-member X-Men lineup is official: Colossus, Kitty Pryde, Marrow, Nightcrawler, Rogue, Storm and Wolverine. But there's a mysterious eighth X-Man to be added in September. And longtime X-Man Gambit is missing. Will he return? *Wizard* tracked down X-writers Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle to find out what's in the cards for the card-chuckin' Cajun.

Are there plans to bring Gambit back to the X-Men?

SEAGLE: "Gambit has plans to bring *himself* back. He does what he wants, and we get out of his way."

KELLY: "Expect him to show up sometime soon. But whether or not he stays is another question."

How would he return? He's in Antarctica.

SEAGLE: "He'd walk. But it's hard to get off of the Antarctic ice-shell without help."

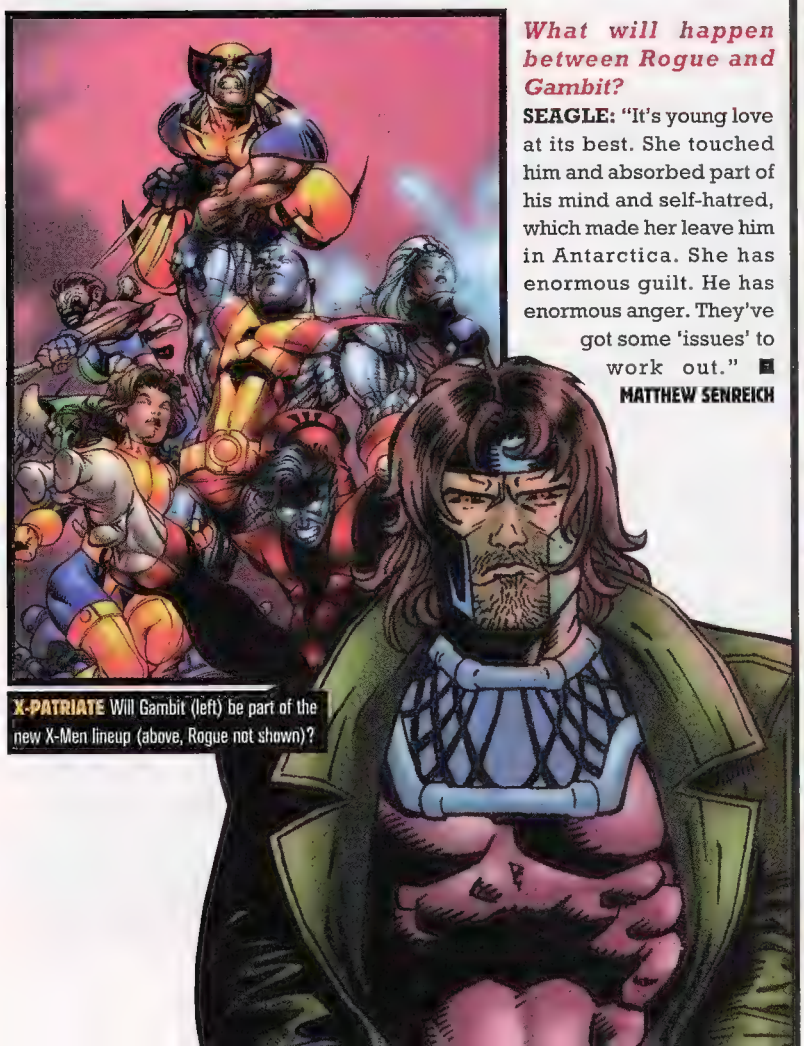
KELLY: "And that's a major part of the story. He may have help getting back, but it'll come with a cost."

Will the Mr. Sinister connection be played up?

KELLY: "Gambit once sold his services to Sinister. He was hired to do a job, and that secret has been exposed. But what Sinister used to pay Gambit is still a secret. What was in that magic bullet is important to Gambit, and an important enough to investigate. Blackmail material, maybe?"

So what was in that vial that Sinister gave Gambit?

KELLY: "Something really cool that will come to [fruition] at the end of an enormous storyline in the winter."



X-PATRIATE Will Gambit (left) be part of the new X-Men lineup (above, Rogue not shown)?

What will happen between Rogue and Gambit?

SEAGLE: "It's young love at its best. She touched him and absorbed part of his mind and self-hatred, which made her leave him in Antarctica. She has enormous guilt. He has enormous anger. They've got some 'issues' to work out." ■

MATTHEW SENREICH

ON THE MOVE

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Can't tell where your favorite comic players are going without a scorecard? Well, here ya go. Now ya got no excuse.

NAME(S)	FORMER BOOK	NEW BOOK	WRITER OR ARTIST?	THE SCOOP
Brian Augustyn/ Mark Waid	still writing *JLA: Year One*	*Flash*	Writers	After a one-year hiatus, the writing tandem of Waid and Augustyn returns for another *Flash*-dance.
Eric Battle	*Icon*	*Aquaman*	Artist	Battle emerges from relative obscurity to dive into his first big-time assignment on *Aquaman*.
Doug Braithwaite	*Green Arrow*	*Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*	Artist	Primarily a DC guy, the former *Green Arrow* artist jumps to Marvel and *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*.
Norm Breyfogle	*Batman: Shadow of the Bat*	*Anarky*	Artist	After teaming up with Alan Grant to create the anti-hero Anarky four years ago, Breyfogle and Grant finally get a shot at an *Anarky* ongoing.
John Byrne	still penciling *Amazing Spider-Man*	writing *Incredible Hulk*	Writer/Artist	Byrne is starting to look like the new "do-it-all" man at Marvel.
Joe Casey	*Incredible Hulk*	*Hellcop*	Writer	Casey, out after seven issues of ol' Greenskin, moves on to one of the Avalon Studios launches.
Chuck Dixon	*Green Arrow*	*Birds of Prey*	Writer	After a slew of Dixon-written mini-series and one-shots, *Birds of Prey* takes flight as an ongoing series.
Steve Epting	*X-Factor*, about two years ago	*Superman*	Artist	After laying low for awhile, this former *X-Factor* artist leaps back into the limelight with *Superman*.
Ron Garney	*Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*	*Incredible Hulk*	Writer	The human volleyball, Garney starts his fifth "regular" art assignment in 30 months.
Brian Holguin	still writing *KISS: The Psycho Circus*	*Spawn*	Writer	Holguin's work on *KISS: The Psycho Circus* earns him a co-writing slot on Todd McFarlane's baby/prize possession.
Erik Larsen	*Savage Dragon* and *Aquaman*, both of which he still writes	*Wolverine*	Writer/Artist	Larsen, taking on another monthly, challenges John Byrne for the title of Mr. Fix-It.
John Paul Leon	*Challengers of the Unknown*	*Earth X*	Artist	*Challengers* got the ax, but Leon is Alex Ross' hand-picked choice to draw *Earth X*.
Scott Lobdell	*Daredevil*	*WildC.A.T.s*	Writer	Not exclusive at Marvel for the first time in seven years, Lobdell takes on monthly *WildC.A.T.s* writing chores and script writing for TV and movies.
Doug Mahnke	*Major Bummer*	*Superman: The Man of Steel*	Artist	*Major Bummer* gets tanked, but Mahnke's dynamic art style should breathe life into Supes.
Tom Mandrake	*Spectre*	*Martian Manhunter*	Artist	Mandrake wrapped up his five-year run on *Spectre* and now he hops aboard a JLA spinoff.
Alan Moore	*Supreme, Youngblood*	"Mooreverse" line	Writer	Awesome's funds dry up, so WildStorm rewards Moore with his own four-book playground.
Todd Nauck	*NewMen*	*Young Justice*	Artist	After two years of fill-in assignments, Nauck gets his shot at the big time, teaming with Peter David on *Young Justice*.
Mark Schultz	*Xenozoic Tales*	*Superman: The Man of Steel*	Writer	Schultz, whose comics work has been limited, due in part to the *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* cartoon, signs on as Big Blue's new writer.
Peter Snejberg	tons of Vertigo fill-ins	*Starman*	Writer/Artist	Snejberg gets his first full-time, ongoing assignment on the critically acclaimed *Starman*, replacing artist Tony Harris.

BYRNE'S 'HULK' TO HAVE TV INFLUENCES

John Byrne plans to smash the world of *The Incredible Hulk* as we know it. And he'll be bringing the flavor of the Bill Bixby "Hulk" TV series to his version of the jade giant starting with February's issue #475.

Joining Byrne is artist Ron Garney (*Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*), and the two will be taking over after a seven-issue writing stint by Joe Casey. As the regular writer, Byrne represents a significant new direction for *Hulk*; before Casey, writer Peter David guided the jade giant for 133 consecutive issues.

"The most I can say without giving away too much," Byrne said, "is that we're leaning toward a direction, oddly enough, that feels like the [Bill Bixby] television series. We're looking to do smaller, human-interest stories that have the Hulk dropping in on different people with different problems each issue."

In an effort to boost the title's visibility, the creators and editor Matt Idelson are planning to feature a series of guest stars—which Byrne stresses will *not* be crossovers. "Story elements won't return to the other book—they'll be self-contained, guest-star stories." No specific heroes have been decided yet.

Byrne said the Hulk's personality will edge back toward the "Hulk smash!" version, but there won't be any abrupt movement. "That's the direction Marvel wants it to go," he said. "But it definitely won't be there on day one."

The Hulk's traveling style means the creative team won't be relying much on past supporting characters. "Our goal is to try, as much as possible, to introduce new characters that we can develop." As a result, fans don't have to worry that Betty Banner, who died in issue #466, will be revived. Unless, of course, Byrne changes his mind.

"I guess Peter David said he thinks she's permanently dead," Byrne said wryly. "But I think I could revive her in two panels." ■ CRAIG SHUTT

BYRNE-IN' RUBBER Byrne (inset) will have his *Hulk* hit the road come February.

BYRNE PHOTO BY JOHN T. BARR.

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Do those fish really explode? - Terry Moore

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NEWS&NOTES

AC COMICS

Pure Superhero Pak-paperbacks featuring black-and-white reprints of Golden Age adventures with Bulletman, Spy Smasher and Minute Man–goes on sale in September. Art from 1940s greats Lou Fine and **Will Eisner** is featured.

ACCLAIM PUBLISHING

Come October, Acclaim resumes a modest publishing schedule with a series of "game guides" for *Turok* and *Turok II* video games. The 64-page magazines will contain game tips, articles and comic stories.

ANTARCTIC PRESS

The Collected Box Office Poison TPB Vol. 1 reprints issues #0-4 of the funky comic in September.

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT

Awesome is back on track and the **Jim Starlin/Stephen Platt** *Fighting American: Dogs of War* mini-series will see publication in the fall of '98.

CARTOON BOOKS

Has Fone Bone killed Kingdok? Check out September's ***Bone*** **#34** for the answer.

PURGATORI

CHAOS! COMICS

Co-creator **Steven Hughes** returns to art chores on September's *Lady Death* #9. September also sees the launch of a ***Purgatori*** ongoing series by David Quinn and Al Rio.

CHECKER COMICS

Checker begins publishing Josh Blaylock's ***Penguin Bros.*** with issue **#4** this October.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

Shi: The Way of the Warrior will be novelized by Craig Shaw Gardner and available exclusively to comic retailers.

DARK HORSE COMICS

The Dirty Pair–Biohazards is a 120-page collection of the Pair's early American comics. Also in September, go behind the

cont'd →

SUPERMAN: THEN & NOW

The critically acclaimed *Batman: The Long Halloween* creative team of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale is taking its shot at the Man of Steel in the current *Superman: For All Seasons* mini-series. And just like in *B:TLH*, Loeb and Sale have chosen a "Year One" setting to tell their story. Think things haven't changed much since Superman first appeared in Metropolis? Think again.

THEN	NOW
SUPERMAN	
Loeb said, "At this point, he's much more Clark than Superman. He's a high school kid from Kansas, a country mouse who's becoming a city mouse. What's interesting to me is how a farmboy comes to grips with living in the big city, all the while coming to grips with the fact that if he wanted, he could beat the crap out of anyone on the planet."	Clark is used to Metropolis, and has made a name for himself as a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *Daily Planet* and a novelist. As Superman, he's been killed, resurrected, married, turned into Electric Blue Superman, turned into Electric Blue *and* Electric Red Superman, then turned back into "regular" Superman. He's kept busy.
LOIS LANE	
Lois is a tenacious reporter in a fierce rivalry with the *Planet*'s prize rookie Kent, just in from the boondocks. She's a little contemptuous of him, and even calls him "Smallville." Loeb said, "I like her as a firebrand. She's smart, she's sassy, and as much as she's competitive with Clark, Clark is infatuated with her."	She's mellowed, mostly because she married her old rival, Clark Kent. A Pulitzer-winning novelist, she'll still do whatever needs doing to get that scoop, but all her rivalries with other reporters are friendly.
LEX LUTHOR	
Believe it or not, Metropolis' major industrialist has hair. "He's also an angry Lex," Loeb said. "He's not used to having the spotlight taken off him, and now there's this 'Superman' stealing his limelight. At this point, there are still more people in Metropolis who know Luthor than know Superman, but that's changing."	He's lost his hair, died, been cloned, destroyed Metropolis and blamed it all on the clone, got married secretly, had a kid and locked his wife in the hospital after putting her in a coma after the birth of his kid. You could say he's kept busy too.
JIMMY OLSEN	
Loeb calls the bowtie-wearing sidekick, "the eager young photographer looking to impress everyone. And he's 'Fashion Statement 101.' Jimmy dresses the way he does because it was actually cool to wear a bowtie back then."	No longer a newcomer, Jimmy once enjoyed a successful career as "Mr. Action," a reporter on Metropolis' WGBS-TV. Now, after airing a failed documentary on Superman's real identity, he's trying to rebuild his crumbling career.
PERRY WHITE	
Loeb said, "Perry's the gruff city editor at the *Daily Planet* whose job it is to praise Clark and say to Lois, 'Why can't you do it more like Kent does?' He won't take Clark under his wing directly, but he'll use Clark to push Lois and make her a better reporter."	Like Lois, Perry has softened in his old age. He still runs a tight ship at the *Planet*, but after a bout with cancer (he's now in remission) and adopting a young son, Perry's shuffled some priorities in his life.
LANA LANG	
Loeb called Lana, "Clark's first girlfriend and the first woman outside of his mom that Clark has come to trust. In many ways, she knows Clark better than he knows himself. She's a great friend to him and in many ways, the counterpoint to Lois."	Counterpoint to Lois? It's kinda ironic. Today, Clark is *married* to Lois, and Lana has gone on to marry another of the Smallville crowd–Clark's old buddy Pete Ross.

■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

A ▶ HEY, FEELING GOOD IS FOLDING A TO B. ◀ B

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WOW, IT'S AMAZING HOW FAR WE WILL GO TO FIND A PEACHY KEEN FLAVOR. FOR EXAMPLE, SENDING A STRAWBERRY QUESTIONING ITS FATE BY ROCKET LAUNCHER FROM FRUITLESS TOIL ON EARTH TO A DISTANT UTOPIA.

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A ▶ ◀ B

scenes to discover comics' rich history with the massive, 500-page, full-color coffee-table book *Comics: Between the Panels*.

DC COMICS
Guest artist **Jim Starlin** (*Hardcore Station*) fills in on August's *Superman* #139. . . August also marks the debut of ***The Minx***, a Vertigo ongoing about millennium fever and monkey gods. Monkeys!

DREAMSMITH STUDIOS
George Pérez (*Avengers*) contributes the center spread in September's *The Book Handbook*, which also includes pin-ups by Mike Wieringo, Brandon Peterson, Chris Sprouse and more!

EVENT COMICS
Brian Augustyn and **Mike Mignola** co-write a *Painkiller Jane/Hellboy* crossover one-shot in August.

FANTAGRAPHICS
You can keep loving "Hate" with ***Hate Jamboree*** in September. This 64-page one-shot recaps and celebrates Peter Bagge's hit alternative comic and features a sneak peek at Bagge's future projects.

FULL BLEED STUDIOS
Pitt confronts the mastermind behind his recent troubles in *Pitt* #19, the epilogue to the "Ugly Americans" storyline.

HARRIS COMICS
New *Vampirella* writer **Malachy Coney** (*The Darkness*) pits Vampi against Mistress Nyx in September's *Vampirella: Hell on Earth* #1.

HYPERWORKS
Back-issue sensation ***Deity*** gets launched in an ongoing series this September to follow up the just-completed six-issue mini-series.

IMAGE COMICS
C.H.I.X. That Time Forgot features 11 creators including **Karl Kesel** (*Adventures of Superman*). It's 40 pages of full-color mayhem for $2.95 in August.

• **HIGHBROW**
Savage Dragon #53 in September features the return of the super-team Brute Force. It's an **Erik Larsen** production.

• **TOP COW COMICS**
D. Gavin Taylor, the bad-ass made famous in the pages of *Witchblade*, rears his ugly head in September's ***Ascension*** #10.

• **WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS**
You'll flip for **Warren Ellis** this September, as WildStorm offers an eight-page preview of Ellis'

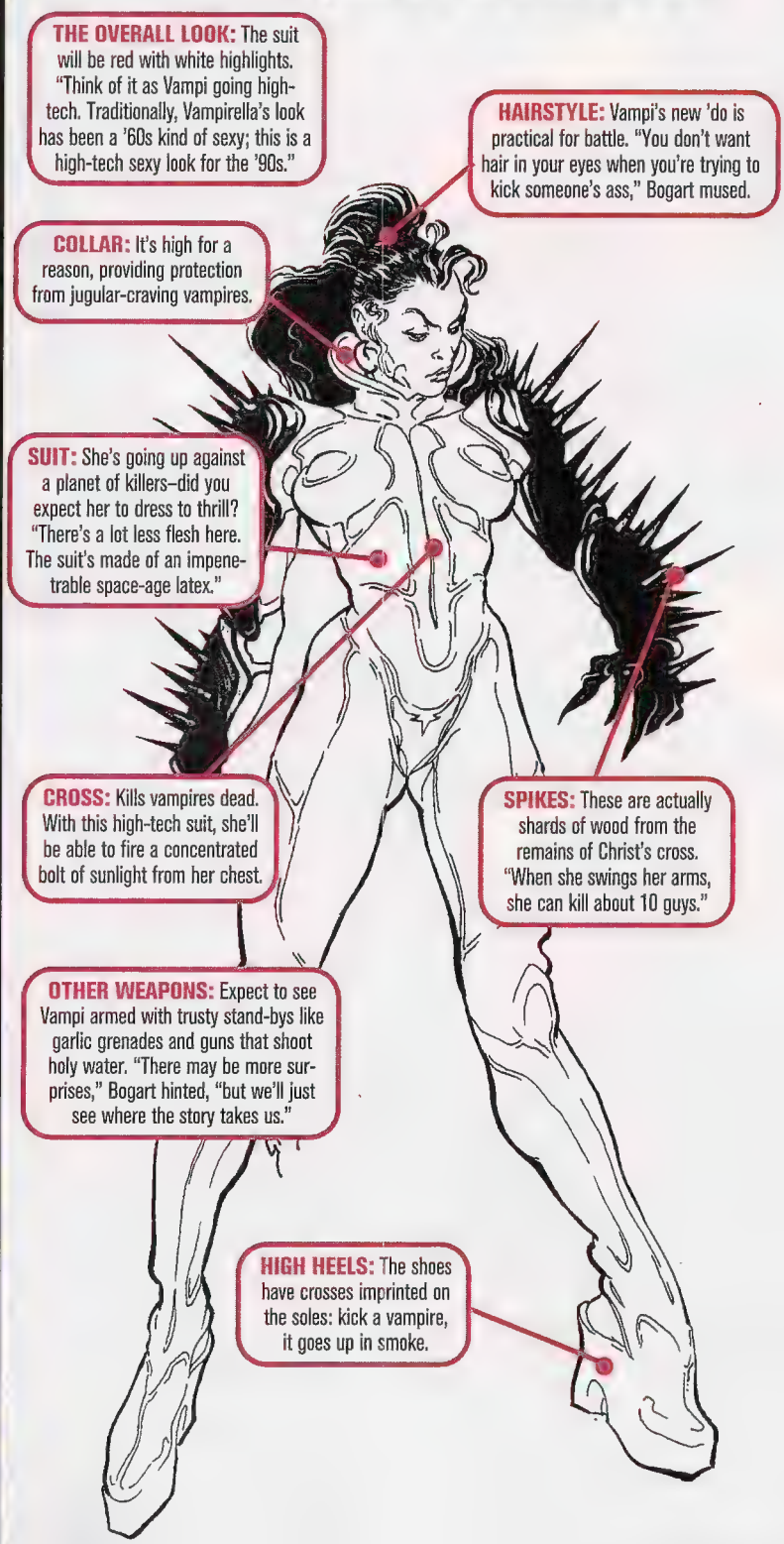
cont'd →

REVAMPING VAMPIRELLA

She's dressed to thrill. And kill.

Sexy vampire hunter Vampirella will shed her well-known skimpy costume in favor of a new costume starting in November's *Vampirella* #10 (subtitled "Hell on Earth" #1). New writer Malachy Coney (*The Darkness*) and artist Louis Small Jr. tie the new suit into "Hell On Earth," where Vampi must save Earth from invaders from her home planet of Drakulon.

Here's a first look at the preliminary design of the costume with commentary from Harris' Editorial Director David Bogart, who said some fine-tuning will be done before it hits stands. ■ **REPORTING BY CHRIS HUTCHINS, ART BY GREY.**



DEATH GOES TO NEW ORLEANS

Death, Vertigo's surprisingly cute and cuddly personification of, well, death, is back. But this time, a four-issue mini-series shipping in October will *not* be written by Death's creator Neil Gaiman. Instead, horror and dark fantasy author Caitlin Kiernan, who got her start in the comic world when Gaiman asked her to write a story showcasing the Corinthian in *The Dreaming* #17-#19, will pen it.

Set in America's mojo capital of New Orleans, *The Girl Who Would Be Death* isn't just another Death story. "It's more about the effect the character has upon the world," Kiernan said. "This time, someone uses the Magdalene Grimoire, the book that was used to capture Morpheus in *Sandman* #1, to try and capture Death and take over her role to get back at a lost lover." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

GERBER PLANS BIZARRE SUPERMAN TWIST

Writer Steve Gerber, known for bizarre tales on titles such as *Howard the Duck* and *Nevada*, steps into the mainstream DC Universe this fall with *A. Bizarro*, a four-issue mini-series telling the story of a creature made from inanimate matter. And for those wondering, "A. Bizarro" isn't a typo—it's the main character's name. Joining Gerber on pencils for the series is MD Bright, late of *Quantum and Woody*.

Gerber promises *A. Bizarro* won't just rehash old Superman-Bizarro stories, or even focus on the Bizarro readers have already seen. "I want to take a tiny corner of the Superman mythos and explore it at a level of detail that isn't possible in the monthly books," Gerber said. "*A. Bizarro* is told on a very intimate level, as opposed to the broad sweep and scale of the regular titles. It's a kind of Superman story that readers haven't seen for a while. I think they're going to enjoy it." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

HOW BIZARRE How Bizarro smell with no nose? Terrible! Hah! Hah!

DALE KEOWN RICHARD PACE

PITT #19

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NEWS&NOTES

new *Planetary* series in *Gen*[13] #33, *C-23* #6 and *Battle Chasers* #5. ... **Jim Lee** provides a horrifying cover to September's *Resident Evil* magazine.

JNCO INDUSTRIES

The urban clothing/fashion company debuts the ongoing *Flamehead* in August.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell provide an epilogue to serial killer Jack The Ripper's tale in September's *From Hell: Dance of the Gull Catchers*.

LIAR COMICS

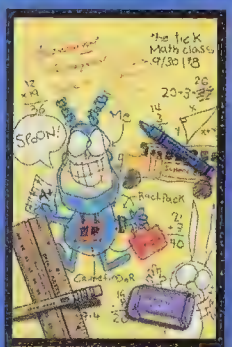
More Than Mortal: Sagas #2 will reveal the origin of Brigid the Protector in September.

MARVEL COMICS

John Byrne ("Twice Told Tales") writes August's *Amazing Spider-Man* #440 and *Spectacular Spider-Man* #262. ... Also that month, *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #2 features a variant cover from legendary Cap co-creator **Joe Simon**.

NEW ENGLAND COMICS

School's in! September sees the release of ***The Tick's Big Back to School Special*** where the Tick sneaks into school undercover.



THE TICK'S BIG BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL

OLSEN COMICS

August's ***Dick Danger*** #4 asks the question no one wants answered: Is Hitler still alive?

QUANTUM CAT ENTERTAINMENT

August's *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated* features a story by **Neil Gaiman** (*Sandman*) and Tony Daniel (*The Tenth*).

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

Scary Godmother: The Revenge of Jimmy is the second of **Jill Thompson**'s Halloween graphic novels. It's 40 pages of hardcover, fully painted goodness for $19.95.

SLAP HAPPY COMICS

Akiko's **Mark Crilley** and *Wolff & Byrd*'s Batton Lash provide the cover to *Monstrosity* #1, a comic filled with pin-ups of original monsters by top-notch small-press talent, including Chris Yarbou (*Mr. Beat*).

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

Potential: Unit Three continues **Ariel Schrag**'s high-school diaries in September.

EXCLUSIVE ARTWORK FEATURED IN CBLDF BOOK

Supporting the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund has never been easier.

August's *Free Speeches* will feature tons of exclusive artwork from superstar artists such as Art Adams, Mike Allred, Jeff Smith and Will Eisner, along with several powerful speeches that address the subjects of censorship and the rights of the individual by creators Dave Sim, Frank Miller and Neil Gaiman. Profits from the book will go directly to the CBLDF.

The 48-page *Free Speeches*, published by Oni Press, retails for $2.95. ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

MILLER AND SIM PHOTOS BY AL ORTEGA

LOUD AND PROUD Dave Sim (above, top) and Frank Miller (above, bottom) tell the censors where to stick it.

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

'BATTLE CHASERS': Joe Madureira is proving that a sword-and-sorcery feel can work in comics with his fun-as-all-hell *Battle Chasers*. Don't be surprised if Madureira's superhero take on the mythical sparks a fantasy revival, just as his manga-influenced artistic style has inspired an entire younger generation of artists.

'FATHOM' PREVIEWS: Michael Turner's *Fathom Preview* and *Fathom* #0 were the ultimate movie trailers, getting readers excited about the book without revealing key plot elements. Unlike other titles (i.e. *Danger Girl*), readers could jump on with the #1 issue and not feel like they've already missed something.

'PREACHER"S ORIGINALITY: A recent *Preacher* storyline saw Starr forced to wipe a retarded man's butt in exchange for a gun to try and escape a family of cannibals. Get the picture? *Preacher* writer Garth Ennis is shockingly graphic, totally irreverent and always original. Where he does he get this stuff from? We don't wanna know.

THUMBS DOWN

JLA OVEREXPOSURE: *Green Arrow* #132-#133. *Lobo* #50. *Resurrection Man* #2. *Starman* #43. *Steel* #50. In shameless fashion, DC Comics has wedged the top-selling JLA into numerous mediocre-selling DC titles, hoping to boost sales. If the JLA is gonna guest-star, make it have meaning! Shouldn't its members help rebuild Gotham City after the "Cataclysm" earthquake?

'GENERATION X' #40: Trying to decipher the skinny on Gen X members M and Penance made us wanna eat a bullet. Okay, let's see: A long time ago, Emplate transformed the real Monet into Penance. Monet's younger twin sisters discovered this and merged to become Monet in their older sister's place. Then in the present, Penance goes back to being Monet, and the twins who posed as Monet become Penance. End the pain...end the pain...

'SUPERMAN' CREATIVE CHANGES: The Man of Steel's storylines have become stagnant and repetitive. DC has recognized the problem, altering one-third of the creative team. But it's not enough. To give Superman a much-needed shot in the arm, the creative team needs to be overhauled to bring in some fresh–and possibly radical–perspectives. And we're not just talking about a new costume. ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

ROSS HUNGERS FOR SUPERMAN PROJECT

Supervillains? No problem. Natural disasters? A walk in the park. World hunger? Superman may have finally met his match. Good thing he's got Alex Ross on his side.

Ross, the painter behind *Marvels* and *Kingdom Come*, has done 30 new, double-page spread paintings that make up *Superman: Peace on Earth*, a 64-page one-shot in oversize format shipping from DC Comics in November.

"We apply the fiction of Superman's abilities to real-world problems," Ross said. "Superman tries to solve world hunger." The problem? Certain governments may not actually *want* the Man of Steel's help.

But Ross *is* pulling in some help: Paul Dini, producer of the "Superman Adventures" cartoon, is scripting the book.

"[Paul] understands Superman's personality perfectly, which is what's needed," Ross said. "This story is completely heard from Superman's point-of-view. It's really Superman's story, the way he wants to tell it."

And Ross wants to tell the story a bit differently also. *Peace on Earth* has no word balloons. Text and dialogue will run along side Ross' paintings.

"I think it invites the eye to see everything on the page," he says of the technique. "You don't have to worry about too much information being crammed into small panels. I want to make this accessible to all readers, from the youngest to the oldest. Hopefully, it can start to train new readers in the language of comics." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

contestwinners

LUCKY STIFFS

Humberto Grando of Elizabeth, N.J., is grand indeed. He won *Wizard* #81's "Create a Monster for *Battle Chasers*" contest. Grando's monster will grace the pages of a future *Battle Chasers* issue!

Mark Torres of Marikina, Philippines, is the winner of *Wizard* #81's "Redesign Superman" art contest and he nets a fortress full o' prizes including Tom Grummett original art!

Patrick Burke of Goleta, Calif., walks off with the new *Scud: Industrial Evolution* game and a slew o' Scud goodies from *Wizard* #81's "My Name is Scud" contest!

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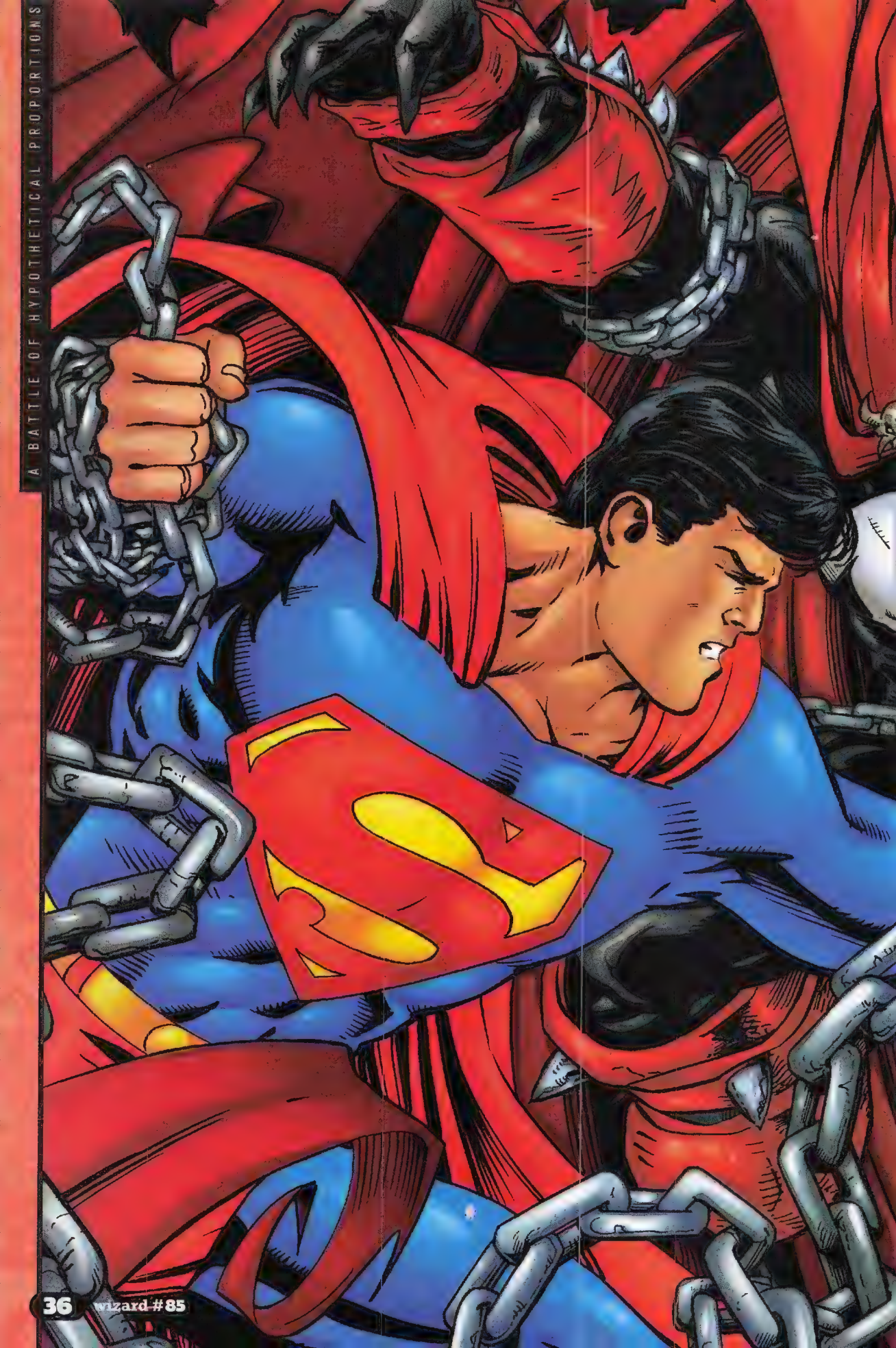

LAST MAN STANDING

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SUPERMAN VS. SPAWN

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'3"	HEIGHT	around 6'5"
225 lbs	WEIGHT	unknown
75"	REACH	around 78"
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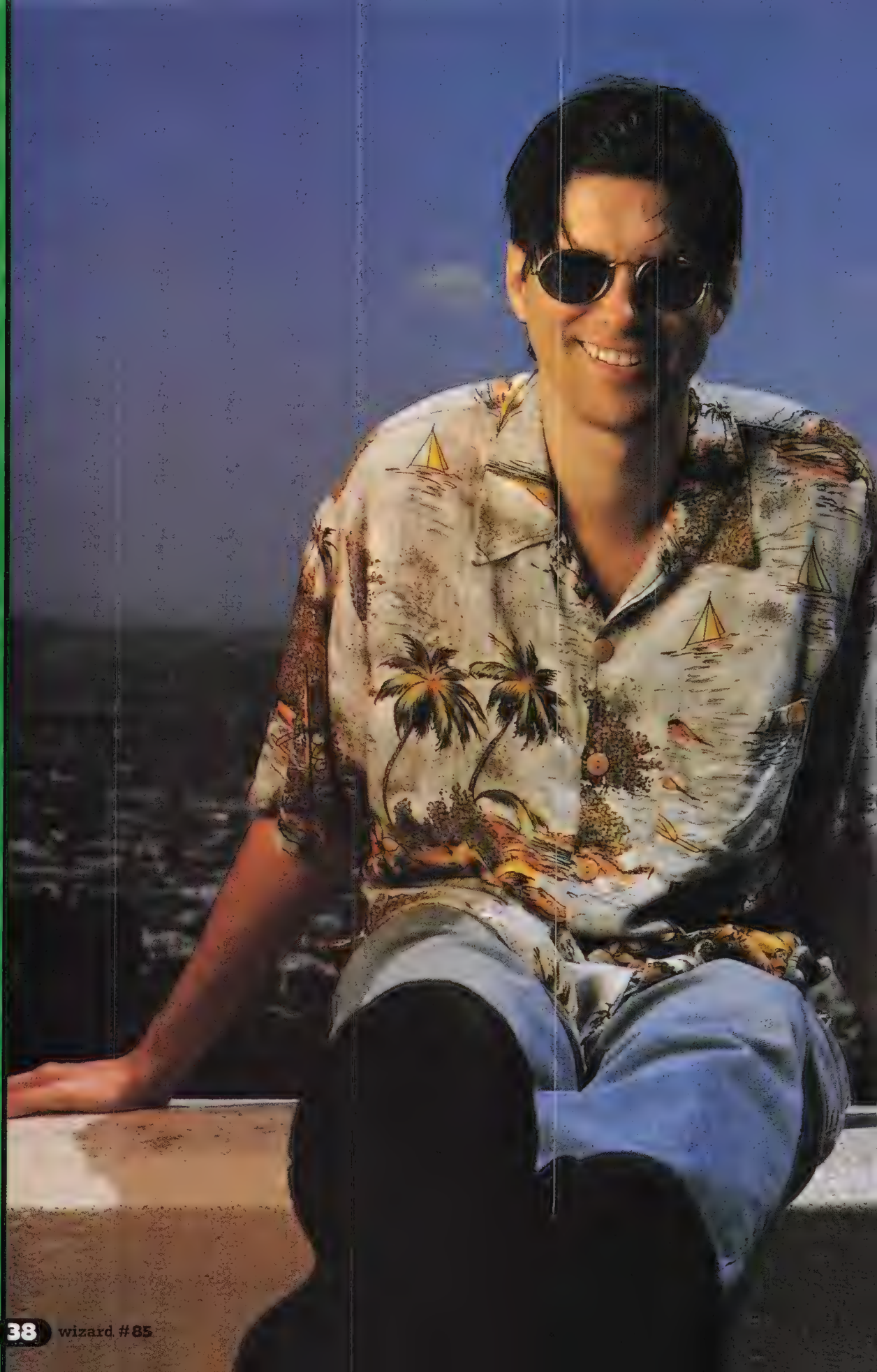
Fair	COMPLEXION	Vomitous
Red	CAPE	Absurd

Betrayed and murdered by his teammates, U.S. government assassin Al Simmons made a pact with the devil for a second chance at life. Returning to Earth in a hideous undead body and possessing nearly limitless magics that feed off his life-force, Simmons—known to most as Spawn—finds himself in a doomed battle to save his soul.

The sole survivor of the dead planet Krypton, the infant Kal-El was rocketed to Earth, where our yellow sun granted the child super-speed, super-strength, flight, invulnerability, and a host of other fantastic powers. Raised to respect and protect all life at any cost, he now—as Superman—defends those who cannot defend themselves.

tha winnah... With his assassin training and "no such thing as a cheap shot" attitude, Spawn would ambush the Man of Steel, drawing first blood. Pressing the advantage, Spawn would then hammer Supes with the only thing besides Kryptonite than can injure Big Blue: magic. Battered, broken and bruised, Superman would hold back and—using blinding speed—concentrate on trying to temporarily restrain Spawn and talk some sense into him. Big mistake. Luring Supes in by acting reasonable, Spawn would wait until the Big S was close and then—BLAM!—finally unleash enough power to...make Superman angry. Sustaining serious injury, Supes would have no choice but to lay into Spawn with all he's got. So while Supes might have to call into the JLA to take some sick days after the fight, the only one walking away from this brawl is the Man of Steel. (W)

this month's battle drawn by BARRY KITSON



THE MIGHTY CASEY

A STROKE OF LUCK LANDED ROOKIE WRITER JOE CASEY ON 'CABLE.' NOW MARVEL'S YOUNG GUN HAS PARLAYED THAT GOOD FORTUNE INTO A STINT ON 'HULK.'

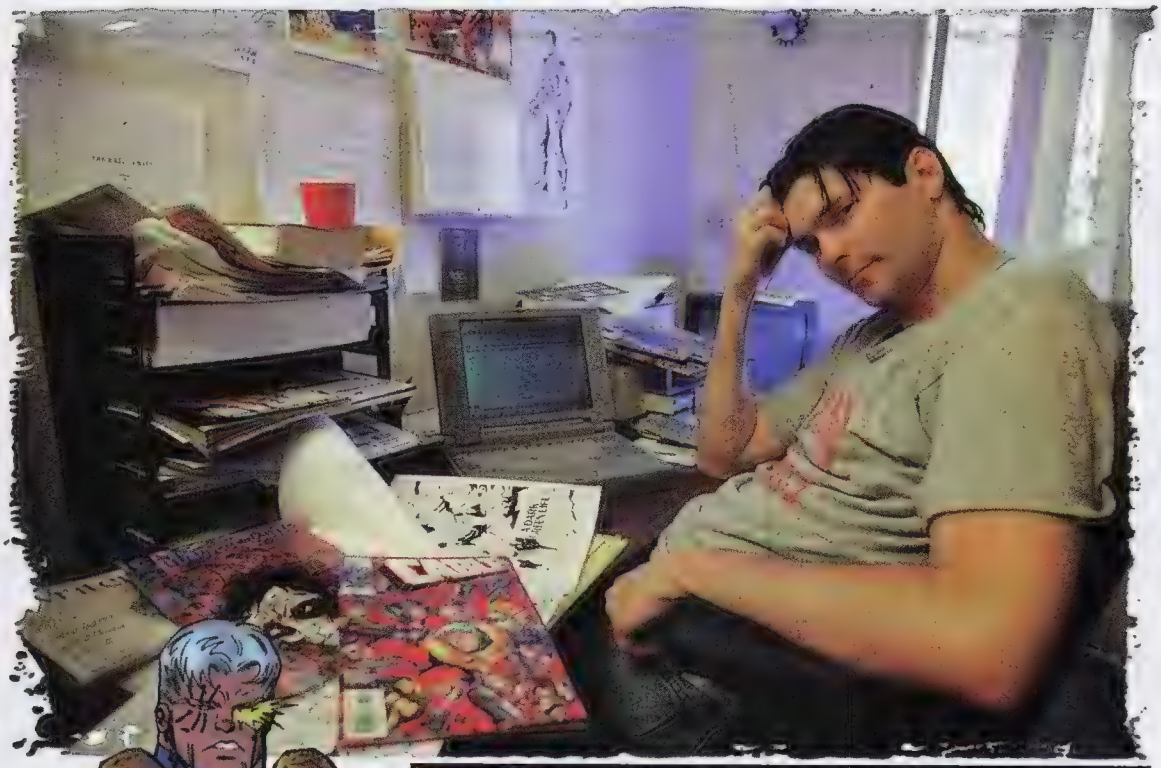
There's a price to be paid for *everything*, comic fame included. Joe Casey's price? Ten cents.

"That's it right there," Casey chuckles, pointing to a rickety, snap-together metal TV tray in his apartment. "My first book, *Cable* #51 was written on that TV tray. I bought it at a used furniture store for a dime." But four months into full-time Marvel writing, Casey upgraded. "I got this used high-school cafeteria table for $10," he says proudly. "When I got that, I knew I was going somewhere."

Somewhere indeed. Eight months ago, Casey was on unemployment and flat broke. Today, he's writing *Cable* and *Incredible Hulk*, two Marvel Comics mainstays. Not bad for this humble-yet-excitable, 27-year-old Tennessee native and Los Angeles transplant.

Casey's fortunes turned on a dime when he met *Starman* writer James Robinson at a comic convention. "I showed him some writing samples and asked him to take a look at them if he had time," Casey says. A lifelong comic fan who majored in creative writing at Memphis State University, he says, "I didn't expect much to come of it." Something did though, eight months later when Casey was working part-time at a Burbank, Calif., book store. "James shopped at the

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY ROBERT BECK PHOTOGRAPHY INC.



CABLE GUY In between memorizing his girlfriend's phone number and writing *Cable* (left) Casey's a part-time musician.

store," Casey explains. "He remembered the samples I gave him and, apparently, he liked them. We'd talk whenever he came in."

Finally, Robinson's busy schedule provided an opportunity for Casey. "James had just written two issues of *Cable*," Casey remembers. "Then he got the job writing the 'Freddy vs. Jason' movie screenplay and told me he was going to have to back off on some things, including *Cable*. I said, 'Wow, that's too bad. I was looking forward to you writing that book. I would love to try some things with *Cable*.' He just smiled and said, 'Okay. We can try to make that happen.' I had no idea what he was talking about."

Casey found out. Robinson gave him a basic idea for *Cable* #51 and asked how he'd write it. "I went home to my apartment, pulled over the TV tray, and wrote out a plot. James told me to change this, change that and change the other thing. I thought it was just a writing exercise. But then he told me to send it to [*Cable* editor] Mark Powers at Marvel. A few days later, James called and said, 'Congratulations. You just wrote *Cable* #51.' I was floored."

Cable #51 ran with Casey's name as writer in the credit box. And make no mistake: Casey knows just how lucky he is to be writing *Cable*, and now, *Incredible Hulk*. "The first thing I ever send to Marvel is the plot to *Cable* #51? And they *publish it*? I know I'm lucky. I'm lucky to have had James hold the door open for me."

Casey, a lanky Jim Carrey look-alike, tells these stories with a smile and a hint of leftover Southern accent. His TV tray and used cafeteria table blend in with the part-time-musician decor of the cramped Hollywood apartment he shares with a roommate. Both moved from Tennessee four years ago, hoping to hit it big in Los Angeles with a band they played in. Drums and guitars are thrown about the place and a weight bench sits in the middle of the living room. In Casey's bedroom, his girlfriend Jessica's new phone number is written on the wall on pieces of white tape in five different places. "I gotta memorize it," he says, "or she...won't be happy with me."

Regardless, Casey is clearly a happy man. "I'm smiling. Being off unemployment—which I was on for a short time—is always a plus." But it took Casey a while to feel secure with his comics job. "Before my first issue hit," he says, "I finally talked to Mark Powers and he asked if I could script some things on two-day turnaround. I was like, 'Hell, yes!'" Casey scripted *X-Men* #73 and *Wolverine: Days of Future Past* #2-#3 over other writers' plots. "I figured I was new

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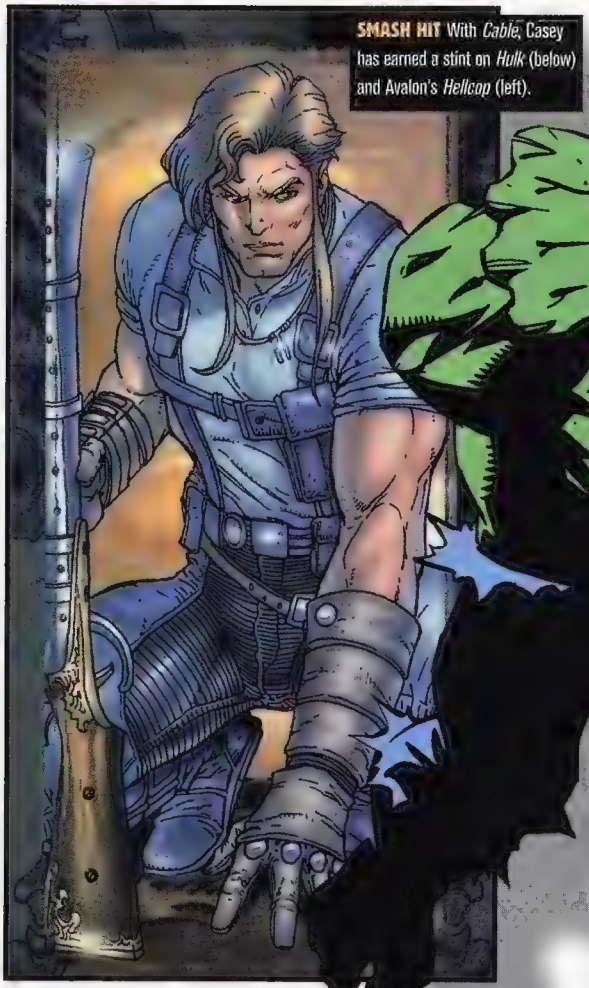

SMASH HIT With *Cable*, Casey has earned a stint on *Hulk* (below) and Avalon's *Hellcop* (left).

and I'd have to jump through some hoops. So I jumped. Anything they threw at me, I was going to take. Give me a hoop—I'll jump through it."

Marvel liked Casey's work. He found out just how much at a February, 1998 writers' conference in New York. "They flew me in, which I figured was a good sign," Casey says. "But it was scary. I was just plugging on, writing *Cable* every month. I was up to #54 by then and nobody *ever* told me I was the regular writer. I figured I'd just keep writing till someone told me to stop. Then I get there and the mandate we got was that we had to be radical, we had to make big changes. And I thought, 'Oh, my God. This is it.' There had been talk about canceling *Cable*. I was sure this was where I got fired. But when the discussion turned to *Cable*, all anyone said was, 'Great book. Doing fine. No problems there.' I breathed the biggest sigh of relief you can imagine. Then I finally sat down and started talking to Powers about long-range stuff, and that's when I realized I had the job."

As a part of that job, Casey has been trying to humanize the normally icy Cable, a mutant from the future sent back to the present to stop the villain Apocalypse. "Cable is here to defeat Apocalypse," he says, "but he has to be written as a real person. Real people are not completely single-minded. Real people have other concerns in their lives, other stimuli. The whole reason that Cable's now centered in Hell's Kitchen is so he interacts with different heroes in the Marvel Universe. There's got to be more than one dimension to him."

Casey wants to explore more dimensions by *ignoring* Apocalypse. And Marvel is letting him. The publisher has promised no Apocalypse appearances until the new millennium, when a massive Cable/Apocalypse confrontation is planned. This frees Casey up for other avenues. "Cable now has a human companion in Irene Merryweather, a reporter who's chronicling his life. Stacey, the coffee shop waitress we just introduced, is going to be developed into a *major* character. The more real people I can get in there, the better."

Along that line of thinking, Casey is introducing a new group of foes for Cable in a four-part story starting in August called "The Nemesis Contract." Casey says, "For years, S.H.I.E.L.D. has been chasing Cable, and they've been like the Keystone Cops. They never catch him. But I'm going to show a portion of S.H.I.E.L.D. that's the anti-Keystone Cops. They're mean, they mean business and even [S.H.I.E.L.D. head] Nick Fury doesn't know about them."

As he talks about the future of *Cable*, the confidence in Casey's voice grows. "If people are still trying to decide if they like the book or if they like me," he says, "this is going to be their deciding factor. This story goes a million miles in every direction. I get everything out that I ever wanted to see in a comic. This is the full monty." Casey also thinks it's the make-or-break story for *Cable*. "This book has always been secondary to the core X-books, *Uncanny* and *X-Men*. Well, I don't feel it has to be. My goal every month is to kick those books' asses. I want the best X-book. I want the best book out there, period. I think this story turns it up to 11. If it flies, great. If not, at least I know I'll stand out from the crowd."

And that inevitable Cable/Apocalypse battle will also stand out. "What lies beyond Apocalypse?" Casey laughs, nervously repeating what he's just been asked. "That's the real question, isn't it? It happens in #76 or #77, at year 2000. I haven't even thought about it yet. I'm just not ready to pin myself down to an outcome." But if Cable loses, doesn't Casey write himself out of a job? "Sure," he smiles. "But if that's the story that needs to be told, then that's the story I tell. Granted, I wouldn't have said that six months ago. But I'm feeling a bit more secure now."

A lot of Casey's security comes from that February Marvel conference, where he met all of Marvel's editors and lined up his next stepping stone: *Incredible Hulk*. "I got a call from [*Hulk* editor] Bobbie Chase, who said Peter David was leaving the book. She asked me to send in a pitch. She read the pitch, then called and said I had the job if I wanted it. And I was like, 'What? All right!'"

Not long after Casey accepted *Hulk*, he was dealt his first industry curveball: Marvel named comic veteran John Byrne as the ongoing writer of *Hulk*; Casey will write only seven issues, and Byrne will take the reins after that.

"Publishing is weird," Casey says, rolling his eyes and scratching his head. "I'm doing seven issues and I know I'm done before the first one even sees print?" But Casey isn't bitter. "I can leave *Hulk* with no feeling of being screwed. Four months ago, I had no idea that I'd be writing it. Peter David was on the book for 12 years. I didn't even have a driver's license when he started. Who thought it would *ever* become available? It's almost like I'm not on *Hulk* long enough to really miss it."

Casey promises stories that are less "Hulk smash!" and more "Bruce think!" in his run, which will include a standard Hulk-vs.-Army

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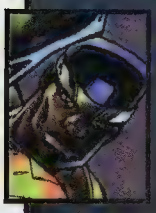
CASEY AT THE BAT

Hey! He's the new kid on the block and he's starting fresh. In a perfect world, what are Joe Casey's dream books and what would he do with them?

SUPERMAN–"I've got a story that would clear away all the 'events' since the death and get him back to basics. After that, it's 'Superman: The Movie' every month. I'd do world-wide stories and heavy human passion. No villain would be too big, no emotion too small. And he's *not* married to Lois Lane. That TV show ruined a lot."

SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS–"It would be a full-blown [crime novelist] Elmore Leonard-style DC Universe crime book with tons of black comedy. I'd follow a core cast of villains through the underworld and see the crap they're involved in. There's a whole side of supervillains that has nothing to do with fighting superheroes. DC's got my proposal. I pray they go for it."



POWER MAN AND IRON FIST–"I'd bring it back to its early '70s blaxploitation, kung-fu, bong-water roots. I think Marvel needs a good, solid cult book. DC has cache with the fans because they do edgy things like *Starman* and *Hitman*. It would be nice to bring a little of that to Marvel."

SUPERMAN'S PAL, JIMMY OLSEN–"I'd do the wackiness of the old '60s series where anything could happen. I'd turn him into Turtle Boy or Jimmy Olsen, the Red-Headed Beatle from 1000 B.C. for an issue if I wanted to. It would be 'anything goes' with a real underground, alternative spin. It would be the wackiest book DC ever put out."

AVENGERS–"Kurt Busiek does such a fine job that whoever writes it after him will inevitably screw it up in the fans' eyes. So maybe I can come in and save it five years down the line. I'd go with a classic Cap-Iron Man-Thor lineup, but it always baffled me that the Hulk never returned when he was intelligent. So I'd include him. And Nova, Galactus' herald. That would give me an excuse to have the Avengers fight Galactus, and how cool is that?" ■ *JM*

smash-up, a battle against weapons master Devlin DeAngelo and the Super-Adaptoid, and a trip to Vegas. "One thing I want to do is make Bruce Banner more capable. The guy's a friggin' world-class nuclear physicist! And how many times have we seen him curled up in the fetal position? How many times have we seen him whining about his life? I'm just so sick of that. That's not an adult to me." Casey's Banner will be cagey, clever, and in control. "To me, Bruce Banner is the hero of the

HOW MANY... of these comics will Casey write someday?

book and the Hulk is an unwanted side that he has to deal with. It's been a while since Bruce has been the hero. Bruce Banner should be able to think his way out of just about any situation and the Hulk is always the last resort, the final and most extreme way to deal with a mess."

Maturity is a big part of the Joe Casey school of writing. While there are tons of comics littering his bedroom floor, lots of "grown-up" stuff—books on film director Martin Scorcese and a slew of books by crime novelist Elmore Leonard—also sit there. And Casey is going to treat his readers the way he wants to be treated. "The comics I liked as a kid never talked down," he says, falling into rabid fanboy mode as he gets excited remembering his favorites. "*Avengers* was great because this government liaison came in to decide their membership and institute affirmative action. Iron Man was an alcoholic. That's heady stuff when you're 10 years old. And the dialogue in those comics didn't condescend. It helped you along the journey to adulthood. I think in the late '70s at Marvel, they had things that fired your imagination as a kid, but it was executed in a way that didn't insult your intelligence."

That's what Casey wants to pull off. "Cable's *got* to talk like a man," he says, stressing the importance. "He's not a boy. A lot of comics sound like they've gone through some weird filtration system to make them 'readable' for a young audience. But that's crap. I want my characters to talk like real people talk."

Casey now has the opportunity to do just that. But did he get it because he's good? Or just because he's been lucky? "It's both, I hope," he says as he nervously plays with the buttons on his shirt. "I lucked out into opportunity. Now I've got to do something with it. Am I good? That's not for me to decide. I think I'm good. And I think I'll get better." Then dipping back into his musical roots, he smiles and says, "I feel like I'm the Beatles in 1964. I've just recorded 'Love Me Do.' I haven't even got close to doing my 'Sgt. Pepper's' yet."

So what's next for Casey? Hopefully, more writing. *Cable* continues every month and the long-term plan is in place. In September, Casey writes *Hellcop*, one of the new Avalon Studios launches about a man who patrols the gate between Hell and Earth. He's branching out, with proposals for new series currently in front of DC Comics (see sidebar). "I can handle doing four monthlies," Casey says. "Right now, I want to try everything. It's been a pretty cool ride so far. I can only hope that the next year has as much change and as many things being thrown at me as last year, because that's what makes it fun. And I'm paying the bills now."

Casey might be paying for more. A catalog from a *new* furniture store is currently on his cafeteria table/desk and he's thinking about a purchase. "A full-blown desk is quite a commitment," he says with a swell of pride. "But...I think I'm ready."

Jim McLauchlin thinks he's ready for the commitment of a new Plymouth Prowler. If anyone's got one they wanna send him, he'll take it.

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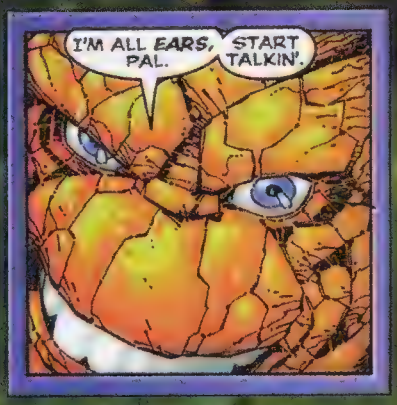
THE WIZARD Q&A

BY CHRIS HUTCHINS • PHOTOS BY J. SCHUYLER



Prodigal son **CHRIS CLAREMONT** returns to Marvel to help put the House of Ideas back in order. And he won't be touching the X-Men.

CHRIS Claremont

"You can come back," Chris Claremont says blandly to a Marvel Comics intern scurrying out of his office. "It's only an interview."

Right away, you can tell that for this 30-year comics veteran, this *is* only an interview, just part of the "been there, done that" duties that come with being an industry icon. And as the questions come, he doesn't try to hide that he's thoroughly bored with it all.

But Claremont's no fool. Sitting behind his cluttered paper-and-comic-book-covered desk in a sparse Marvel office, he knows readers *want* to hear about his return to Marvel as its vice-president/editorial director. And he knows they *want* to get the goods on his current work on Fantastic Four and *want* his opinions about the X-Men.

So Claremont goes through the motions, here in his small 10th floor office at Marvel's Manhattan headquarters. He speaks in a stream of quotes that sound as if they've been said a thousand times before. He makes jokes, but doesn't smile. He hears criticism, but doesn't frown. A few pictures of his beautiful twin infant daughters are the only things bringing charm to the office's spartan walls.

Who knows? Maybe this deadpan delivery is just the way Claremont *is*. Maybe 30 years of interviews and being recognized as the one of the men who made the X-Men hasn't gone to his head. But, as the interview continues, his blue eyes tell another story, flitting from his Post-It note covered computer screen to the goings on outside his door. He gives a well-placed sigh when the questions about the X-Men pop up. He rolls his eyes when he fields one about Wolverine's origin.

Oh, yeah. Claremont's been here. He's done this. But *Wizard* gets the quotes nonetheless. And the quotes, they're pretty good. Claremont probably knows that, too.

After all, it's only an interview.

VITAL STATS

NAME: Chris Claremont

BORN: "Uh, no." (Either way, he was born in England.)

BASE OF OPERATIONS: Marvel offices in New York City and his home in Brooklyn, N.Y.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Started as a gofer for Marvel Comics. Took over fledgling "new" X-Men with *Uncanny X-Men* #94 in 1976 and wrote it for next 17 years, launching spinoff *X-Men* in 1991. Recently returned to Marvel as its vice president/editorial director; he is currently writing its *Fantastic Four* series.

FAVORITE X-MEN PLOT HE NEVER GOT TO WRITE: "I had a whole arc built up leading up to *Uncanny X-Men* #300 where Wolverine became a master assassin of The Hand. It was going to be the X-Men versus Wolverine for a year. It was going to involve Jean Grey being forced to choose between Cyclops and Wolverine." [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Claremont's last issue of* Uncanny X-Men *was #279.*]

WIZARD: The first question, of course, is what brought you back to Marvel? The circumstances were less than friendly when you left.

CLAREMONT: In any long-term relationship, there are ups and downs—and my relationship with Marvel goes back at least 30 years, frighteningly enough. I, along with a lot of other creators in the business, have been bitching a lot in the last few years about how "Things aren't going quite right" and "If I were God Emperor of the Universe, what could I do to make things work?" It got to the point where I think Marvel decided to call my bluff.

So your official title is...?

Vice-president/editorial director. I'm the editors' editor. I give the editors feedback. The writers and artists work for an editor—my job is getting involved directly with editors and helping coordinate; making sure we don't trip over our own feet, providing one more level of checks and balances as far as making sure everything makes sense, giving a final read of things.

Quality control?

Yes. But also to see where new possibilities are in terms of branching characters out, trying new plotlines, figuring out what to do. The idea's to find new takes on old characters perhaps, new characters, new genres, new venues, identifying who our new audience should be and how to get to them.

Tell us about a day in the life of Chris Claremont. You're in the offices Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and the rest of the time you're at home with the kids. Are we right?

Well, I'm still writing, and I do that at home. I just finished up a stint on *Wolverine* [issues #125-#128] and I'm writing *Fantastic Four*. I'm basically doing that when I'm not here.

Your responsibilities here consist of?

Ideally, I should get a copy of every [proposal] that's turned in. I should get a copy of every finished book that's turned in to read. I have proposals from about a dozen people at any given time. I get mail from [*picking up an opened envelope*] 20th Century Fox on various projects. There are meetings with Shirrel [Rhoades, executive vice-president of publishing at Marvel] to discuss new projects and books. There's a lot of sitting down with editors and talking about ongoing storylines, making suggestions.

The days are too short.

It's interesting you came back after all this time. How is your relationship with [former X-Men editor and current Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Bob Harras? Weren't Bob's editorial decisions during the 1980s and '90s one of the reasons you left Marvel?

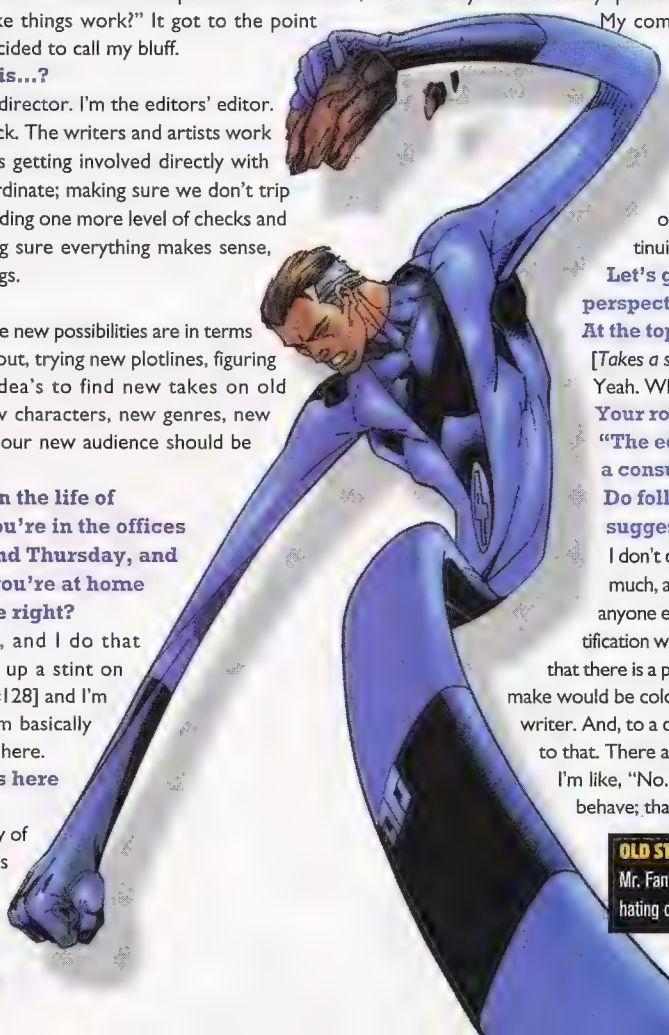
[*Quickly*] The relationship is fine. [*Pauses*] It's old news. Our history is our history. We've actually spent that last couple of years sorting it out. My coming back was not a spur-of-the-moment decision—it's something we've been talking about for about two-and-a-half years. There was a lot of discussion, negotiation. What's important is that Bob and I work with each other well and look forward to continuing that. [*Pauses*] Yeah, that's it.

Let's go for the whole fanboy perspective here for a while. At the top of the list is the X-Men.

[*Takes a sip from his cup of coffee*] Yeah. What about it?

Your role in the books is "The editors' editor." Are you a consultant on the X-books? Do folks call you for input, suggestions, what?

I don't deal with the writers and artists very much, and that was my decision as much as anyone else's. That's partly because my identification with the concept is so broad and deep that there is a perception that the decisions I would make would be colored by what I might do myself as a writer. And, to a certain extent, there's some validity to that. There are storylines on certain books that I'm like, "No. That's not the way the characters behave; that's not what they'd do, how they'd



OLD STOMPING GROUND Claremont will have Mr. Fantastic and company visiting the mutant-hating country of Genosha.

METALHEAD Sabretooth has the adamantium now.

"I want the villain to be significantly more dangerous and formidable than the hero—otherwise, what's the point?"

act." But I don't write those books, and they haven't been my characters for quite some time.

We're sure you followed some of the stories during your absence at Marvel. [*Claremont shakes his head*] You didn't at all? Why? They're your "babies." It seems like you'd be interested...

When you lose custody, sometimes it's better to just walk away.

But do you have any desire to write any of the X-books again?

Part of me will always want to do it. Part of me wants to write them all. Part of me wants to put the whole canon in my pocket, run out the door and come back each month with stories. But my value to the company is in a different direction than that. And I would rather at this point make *FF* more exciting and successful than it is than to go back to the *X-Men*.

If you were asked, would you do it?

[*Long pause, then he kills the coffee he's been drinking and chucks the paper cup in the wastebasket*] I would give it serious thought. But I'd give any assignment serious thought. Fortunately, it's not up to me. That's why they pay Bob [Harras] the big bucks.

Are there too many X-books? Or are we "just fine?"

Oh, no. Eleven X-men books is probably too much because you're drawing from the same well of characters and events. And the sheer logistic of it: I think there are more mutants in the Marvel Universe than there are other superheroes right now. It's hard to be the downtrodden minority when you outnumber everyone else two-to-one. And also, it used to be that the X-Men were the province of one writer, one editor. Then it became two writers and two editors. Now it's four or five editors and a half-dozen or more writers. It's very hard to maintain a consistent tone of focus. I think it's to our advantage to keep the books tightly focused, clean, clear, precise.

Let's talk about Wolverine.

You've heard the question a zillion times before: "When's Wolverine going to get his adamantium skeleton back?"

If it were solely my decision—and it isn't—my answer would be, "Never."

Yikes! "Never?"

He doesn't need it.

But what about those fans who are screaming, "We want the old Wolverine back!"

[*Shrugs and smiles*] The adamantium is back; there is a character in the comic who has adamantium bones and adamantium claws. Unfortunately, it's Sabretooth. In my mind, I want the villain to be significantly more dangerous and formidable than the hero—otherwise, what's the point?

I think it's great that Wolverine is vulnerable, that his bones can be broken. Bad things can happen to him, and he has to factor his vulnerabilities into the equation. If a bad guy comes to him with a sharp enough sword, maybe the guy can take [Wolverine's] head off, as opposed to the old days, where it was, "Hey. Cut me. I don't care."

More importantly, now Sabretooth—the one guy who *truly* doesn't care—can't be killed. How do you win a fight like that? Well, that's the challenge. I'd like to give this concept a run for a while.

I've read interviews where you basically said, "You don't need to know Wolverine's origin, and I don't think we should tell it."

[*Rolls his eyes*] His origin is this: His mom met his dad and life began anew. End of story.

But again, the readers are out there, screaming for more than that.

Good. That's the way I think we should keep it with Wolverine. We want to keep the readers enticed. We want to excite their imagination. If there are at least 100,000 people out there with their own visions of Wolverine's origin, more power to 'em. If any of them want to come here and give me that story that is absolutely kick-ass, we'll consider it. Until then, why spoil the suspense?

I mean, if I get the best story ever written, that's one thing. But I haven't seen it yet.

Do you have any interaction with [former *Uncanny X-Men*] collaborator John Byrne? What's the nature of your relationship with him nowadays since you're both back at Marvel?

Our relationship...is. We don't talk that much, and we haven't for years. Friends drift apart. It happens. He lives in Connecticut, I live in Brooklyn—it's a long way.

Your relationship is perceived as strained.

[*Sits back and crosses his arms*] No strain.

You're so diplomatic. In every interview I've read, you've never said a disparaging thing about Byrne or any other of your collaborators. And yet, we both know that Byrne's said some not-so-nice things about you.

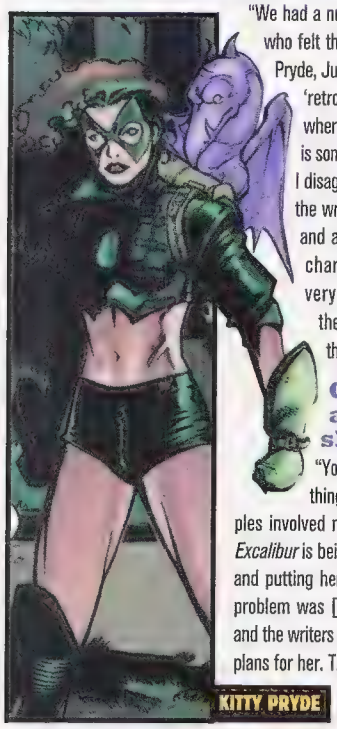
That's John's business. [*Pauses*] That's John's business.

Do you have any plans to work with him again? Are you

WRONG OR WRITE?

Marvel Comics editor and writing legend Chris Claremont has a lot to say about many things. Here's some insight to Claremont's perception of the comics world and his role in it.

On fan criticism of Wolverine #125:


KITTY PRYDE

"We had a number of letters from readers who felt that my interpretations of Kitty Pryde, Jubilee and Wolverine were very 'retro.' It was as if I had picked up where I left off 10 years ago. There is some validity to that, even though I disagree with a chunk of it. But as the writer of the issue in question–and as the creator of most of the characters in question–I have very specific views about who these characters are and how they behave."

On having a plotline shot down:

"You do have the occasion where things don't fly. One of my examples involved me taking Kitty Pryde–since *Excalibur* is being canceled–out of the team and putting her in *Fantastic Four*. The only problem was [X-Men editor] Mark Powers and the writers of the X-Men books had other plans for her. Their wishes take precedence. It may piss me off, but the first rule of this game is 'play nice with others,' whether you're a writer or an editor."

On what Marvel's doing wrong:

"Too many of our stories are too rooted in the past. Personally speaking, I don't really feel an interest to tell the origin of Captain America for a 15th time. Or the first year of Spider-Man's adventures or stories [told] between the original *Uncanny X-Men* [series] and *Giant Size X-Men* #1. We need to break new ground and not keep strip-mining our heritage, for good or ill."

On where he gets his inspiration:

"I think my best stories are the ones that have a definitive visual image. The *X-Men/Teen Titans* [crossover one-shot from 1983] started with me describing that genesis moment to Louise Simonson, the editor, where Dark Phoenix materializes from the primal matter and Darkseid's reaching out...while some John Williams score roars in the background. Some of the best work comes from that visual image." ■ CH

X-MEN/TEEN TITANS

interested in anything like that?

There's no plans, but that doesn't mean that nothing will happen. Given the right circumstances and the right project, sure. I don't know how John feels, but it's been almost 20 years. We've both moved on. And I think that people's expectations of what we would do and would actually be produced might not fit together as easily as you'd think.

It's not to say there wouldn't be magic there; it would just be a different kind. Our sensibilities have evolved. The way we tell stories has changed. Our approach to characters is different. I think if John and I were to work together, it would be best for us to do it under pseudonyms and *not* do the X-Men.

Tell me about writing *The Fantastic Four*. I know you have about two years' worth of plots and plans for the series. Can you talk about some of them? Is the team going to stay in its dockside headquarters, for instance?

Yeah. The next time Four Freedoms Plaza is occupied, it'll be the Baxter Building again. That said, I like them in the warehouse for the time being. I like the idea of the world being able to knock on their door, as opposed to riding an elevator up to see them.

There'll be a three-issue Genosha arc which will reintroduce some old FF antagonists, and bring about a competition between Reed and Crucible again. Then there'll be a story about what happened while the FF were away, involving the "FF Babysitting Squad," which in this case includes She-Hulk.

There are a bunch of ideas, possibly involving the return of Wyatt Wingfoot; a story arc involving Namor and the incarnation of Sue Storm we saw at the end of issue #7; a Monster Island story.

And at some point around the turn of the millennium, the return of Dr. Doom.

Nothing anytime soon?

Nothing specific. And even if there were, there would be "nothing specific."

Right. Will any characters be leaving or joining the team?

The FF is going to remain the core FF, though someone has to take care of [Reed and Sue's son] Franklin. Reed and Sue are already spoken for, but Ben and Johnny are free agents, so it wouldn't be so bad if one of them gets a girlfriend—or two or three. We'll see. For the characters, it's sort of hard to deal with Franklin, because he's a kid and you have to take care of him. That's something [*looks at the photographs of his twins*] I know only too well.

I feel like I'm being thrown into the lion's den when I ask this next question. Your writing style has been characterized as verbose, wordy...

[*Curt*] Yeah, I know.

...melodramatic...

I suspect at this point, I could write a silent story and be accused of being too verbose. You know, it's like I would be perfectly willing to do a word count comparison with *Spawn* or whatever title people come up with. I don't know. I'm sure that could be considered a legitimate criticism. It's not something I aim for, or aspire to do.

Do you have any writing plans outside of Marvel?

I have a novel to finish, part of the [George] Lucas trilogy called "Shadow Star." It's late. I had babies. And I do have other plans, but it's just finding time—I only have so many hours in the day, and this job takes precedence.

So ultimately, what's your plan for Marvel now that you're back?

I want stories, good stories. Well-told. *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* is a perfect example: I think the work that [writer] Howard Mackie is doing is just aces. I was reading an issue last week and at the last page, my thought was, "What the hell happens next?" I haven't thought that way about a comic in a long time.

That's what I want. More stories where people are screaming, "What happens next?"

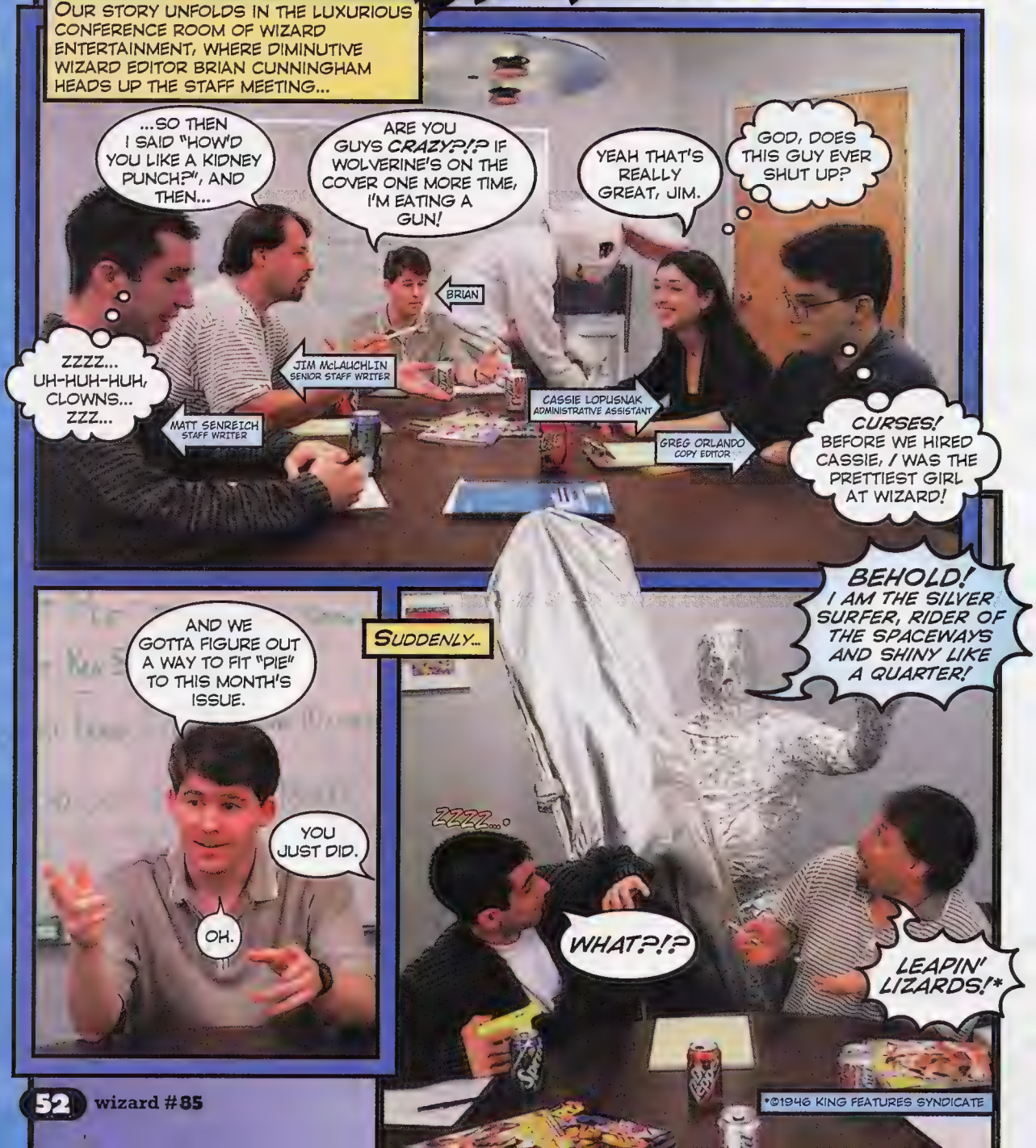
Kentucky-based writer Chris Hutchins wouldn't mind seeing that Wolverine-as-an-assassin storyline.

COMING SOON
METHODMAN
TICAL 2: JUDGEMENT DAY
WU WEAR

GALACTUS ~~MEETS~~ A WIZARD

A WIZARD BULLPEN ADVENTURE

Photos by PAUL "SHUTTERBUG" SCHIRALDI



*©1946 KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

I COME AS A HERALD OF MY MASTER, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, OMNIPOTENT POWER COSMIC, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...
...NO HOPE, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, I MISS SHALLA BAL, MY LIFE SUCKS, BLAH, BLAH--EH?
NOOOOO!
I CAN SEE MYSELF!
?
IS THAT...?
POPCORN!
GOD HELP ME...I'M DELICIOUS AND IT HURTS!
MUNCH MUNCH
MUNCH MUNCH
LATER...
I...I CAN'T FEEL MY LEGS...
...SOMEBODY GET ME A BUCKET...
BELCH!
WHO DARES CONSUME THE AIR-POPPED HERALD OF GALACTUS?!?
SLAM!
I GOTTA LAY OFF THE BATHTUB POTATO GIN!
!
THAT'S IT, I'M OUTTA HERE. THIS IS GETTING JUST WAY TOO GEEKY.
AIIEEE! IT'S JIM SHOOTER!
THIS IS JUST LIKE MY DREAM...EXCEPT HE'S WEARING PANTS.

AFTER COUNTLESS DEFEATS, GALACTUS HAS LEARNED HIS LESSON. I SHALL ONLY CONSUME THE PARTS OF THE EARTH NO ONE WILL CARE ABOUT...

...BEGINNING WITH *WIZARD!*

NOT WHEN YOU SEE WHAT I'VE GOT IN MY PANTS.

...ERR...

WAIT...THAT CAME OUT WRONG. WHAT I MEANT WAS I HAVE SOMETHING YOU FEAR MORE THAN THE ULTIMATE NULLIFIER...

...THAT HERCULES MINI-SERIES FROM 1982. YOU KNOW...THE ONE WHERE YOU GET DRUNK, TAKE OFF YOUR HELMET AND GIGGLE LIKE A SCHOOLGIRL!*

*IT'S AS STUPID AS IT SOUNDS, KIDS!

WHERE'D YOU... *AHEM* FEARSOME, INDEED. YOU MAY HAVE FOUND A WAY TO SAVE ALL YOUR COLLEAGUES.

REALLY?

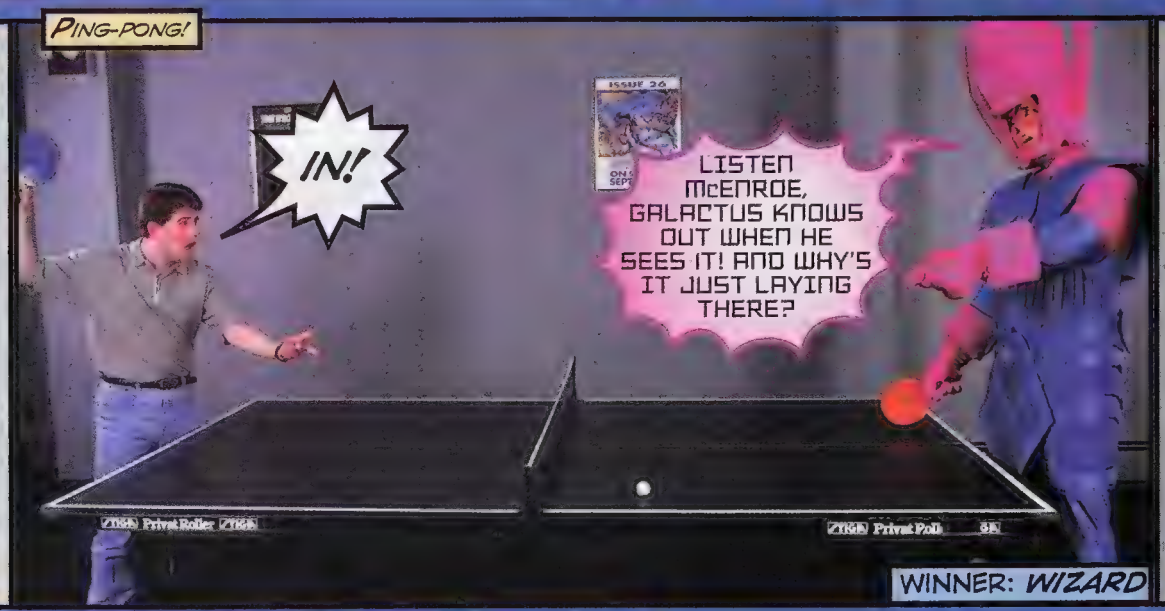
ZAP

NO, NOT REALLY.

NOOooo... I DON'T WANT TO DIE A VIRGINNN...*

BUT YOUR ACCESS TO WIZARD'S COMIC ARCHIVES DOES POSE A POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING THREAT...

MOISTURIZER... MOISTURIZER...



WINNER: *WIZARD*

WINNER: *GALACTUS*

WINNER: *WIZARD*

"YO MAMA" CONTEST VS. STAFF WRITER MATT "FRESH" SENREICH!

YO MAMA'S SO STUPID, WHEN THE WEATHERMAN SAYS IT'S CHILLY OUTSIDE, SHE BRINGS A SPOON!

YO' MAMA'S SO FAT, SHE'S GOTTA PUT HER BELT ON WITH A BOOMERANG.

YO MAMA'S SO FAT, WHEN SHE JUMPS UP, SHE GETS STUCK!

ON JUNE 11, 3:34 PM, IN THE YEAR 1999, YOUR BIRTHMOTHER SHALL BE CONSUMED BY FIRE ANTS. GALACTUS KNOWS ALL.

MOM...?

WINNER: *GALACTUS*

WITH THE SCORE TIED 2-2, THE FATE OF WIZARD WILL BE DETERMINED BY JIM McLAUCHLIN AND HIS BAD GOATEE!

THAT THE BEST YOU GOT, YOU GIANT PURPLE TUNING FORK?!?

FIFTEEN? *FIFTEEN?!?* YOU HALF-A-SISSY!! I CAN EAT TWENTY WHITE CASTLES IN MY SLEEP!!

*

AND THE DECISION: *WIZARD, 3-2!*

BY THE HOARY HOST OF HOGGOTH!!

A WHOLE ROLL, UNFATHOMABLE.

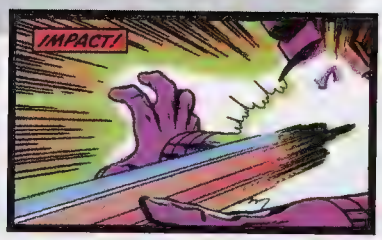
THINK IT'S FUN TO WORK AT WIZARD? TELL THAT TO THE CORPSE OF INTERN CHRIS HUTCHINS!

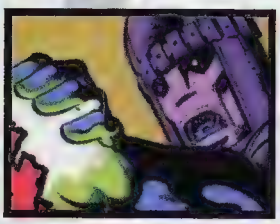
GALACTUS FEELS BETTER NOW, AND TRUE TO HIS WORD, GALACTUS SHALL DEPART YOUR OFFICES AND GET SOME MUCH NEEDED DENTAL WORK.

BUT THERE IS STILL ONE MATTER LEFT UNATTENDED.

FOR GALACTUS IS BEREFT A HERALD.
YEAH, WELL THEM'S THE BREAKS. AND THAT REMINDS ME OF A STORY...
TAKE JIM!
WHA...?!? NOOO!!
IT IS DONE. FAREWELL.
FLASH!
WOO-HOO!
NO MORE TWO-HOUR JIM STORIES!!
LATER...
BOY, THIS GAME IS SWELL.* SAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK JIM'S DOING RIGHT NOW?
WHO CARES? DO YOU THINK A DIAMOND CUTTER WOULD HURT IN REAL LIFE?
*WCW VS. NWO WORLD TOUR FOR THE N64. BEST FIGHTING GAME...EVER!!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR, AWAY...
...YUB?
...SO ANYHOW, MY MASTER SHALL CONSUME THE LIFE-ENERGIES OF THIS PLANET AND LEAVE IT A LIFE-LESS HUSK. BUT, LIKE ANYBODY'S GONNA MISS YOU FRANCHISE KILLERS ANYWAY, RIGHT? WHICH REMINDS ME OF THE TIME ME AND SOME FRIENDS...
SNIFF *SNIFF* ...POPCORN?
HMMM...
THE END

Heat of the Moment





'WIZARD' PICKS THE 25 most memorable moments in comics history

BY THE WIZARD STAFF

If you were kicked in the crotch, you'd remember it.

That's what the 25 most memorable moments in comics are like. (Uh, without the bent-over, sucking-wind feeling.) These are moments so vivid, so surprising, so shocking that they are forever etched in your memory.

So when we set about picking and choosing the 25 most memorable comics moments, it was both a challenge and a pleasure. (Not the crotch-kicking part.)

Our criteria were this: we went for slam-bang, defining moments that smacked you in the face. Sure, the first appearance of Superman in *Action Comics* #1 is pretty memorable, but in a more historical sense than a "Wow, that was intense" type of moment that will never leave you.

We don't expect you to agree with everything. In fact, we had our own arguments over what should stay and go. ("Where's Magneto taking the adamantium outta Wolverine?" and "What about the death of Superman?" made for explosive discussion, let us tell ya.) But we hope you'll agree that these scenes are all vivid, defining moments that kick you in the you-know-what. In other words, they're what make comics great in the first place.

25 Hal Jordan Destroys the Green Lantern Corps *Green Lantern* #40, February 1991

HE WAS THE GREEN LANTERN OF EARTH, a founding member of the JLA and one of DC's most noble heroes. Then, after countless battles on the Guardians' behalf, he returned home to find his city destroyed and everyone in it murdered at the hands of the villainous Cyborg. And it was too much to bear.

Attempting to resurrect the city's inhabitants, Jordan used his power ring to give them all a semblance of life, but lacked the power to sustain it. Pleading to the Guardians for help, Jordan was told what he sought to do was not only impossible, but wrong. They told him to accept his loss. And after years of faithful service and self-sacrifice, he felt abandoned by the Corps and snapped. Hal was convinced the only way he could resurrect Coast City was to do it the hard way: to take the Guardians' power himself.

One by one, Hal brutally takes out his fellow GLs and steals their power rings. Then Hal crosses the line of no return. When fellow GL Boodikka proves to be...uncooperative, Hal takes her ring by force. He slices her hand off to get it.

And the trail of blood begins.

TAKE THIS RING... Hal asks for Boodikka's hand, but his intentions are hardly honorable.

24 Terra Revealed As A Traitor *New Teen Titans* #34, August 1983

IT WAS ALL A SHAM.

And that was the beauty of it when a bratty, smart-mouthed girl named Terra was introduced to DC's young superteam, the Teen Titans, in *New Teen Titans* #28. Sure, she had a shady past. Yeah, she seemed like she was hiding something about herself. But fans of the *New Teen Titans*, a book that ran neck and neck with *Uncanny X-Men* for the industry's best-selling book, loved the earth-controlling cutie.

BAM! Then came issue #34, pulling the rug out from under readers. In its final pages, we learn Terra was planted inside the Titans by its arch-enemy The Terminator. Even after her villainous ways were revealed to her teammates eight months later in "The Judas Contract," fans still desperately wanted to believe she was always a good guy.

ULTERIOR MOTIVE Terra and The Terminator have a secret...

23 Flash Dies Saving the Universe *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #8, November 1985

THE DEATH TOLL WAS ALREADY STAGGERING.

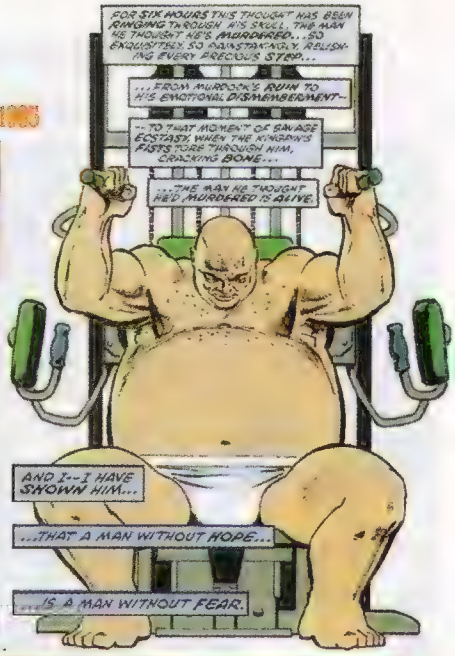
In *Crisis* #7, Supergirl (the pre-*Crisis* version) bit the dust. In the first three issues, so did countless billions of people from Earths of parallel dimensions. But there was one death absolutely no one expected: Barry Allen, a.k.a. The Flash.

Allen's death shouldn't have been surprising, given what the hero had gone through previously. He was on trial for murder, nearly booted out of the JLA and his own title was canceled, supposedly to let him live happily ever after.

Not so. Instead, Flash was kidnapped after the fact by *Crisis*' main villain, the Anti-Monitor, who wanted to destroy several parallel Earths with his anti-matter cannon. Running at speeds faster than light, the Flash escaped and destroyed the cannon. But Flash's victory came at a price: at the speeds he needed, Flash literally ran himself to death.

RUN DOWN Flash disintegrates saving the world, but why doesn't his costume? Ah, well–looks cool, doesn't it?

22 "...A Man Without Fear..." *Daredevil* #229, April 1986



"THERE IS NO CORPSE."

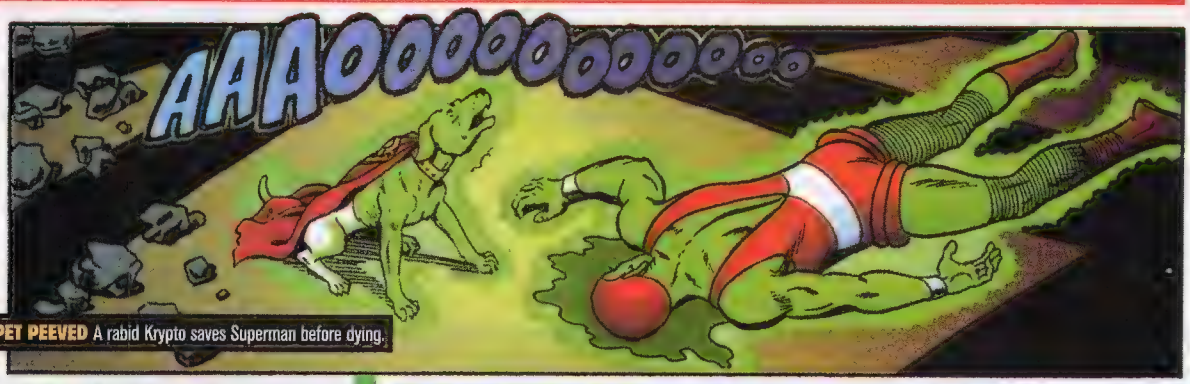
Those words haunted the Kingpin of Crime. For the past three issues, the coolly calculated Kingpin had systematically stripped his nemesis Daredevil of his job, his friends, his sanity and, Kingpin thought, his life. But no body was found when the crimelord shackled Daredevil in a run-down cab and dumped it in the East River. Daredevil yet lived.

"There is no corpse." The words repeated themselves in Kingpin's rattled mind as he lifted weights, straining his body to unseen limits, realizing not only his failure but also that he underestimated his foe. And by pushing DD to the brink of death and insanity, Kingpin gave DD's casual moniker "The Man Without Fear" new meaning by making sure DD had absolutely nothing more to lose.

Kingpin called DD a "minor concern." But the villain learned his nemesis was much more than he believed. "Now he is much more than this," Kingpin said. "He always was. And I—I have *shown* him...that a man without *hope*...

"Is a man without *fear*."

SWEATING DETAILS Kingpin ponders failure.



PET PEEVED A rabid Krypto saves Superman before dying.

21 The Death of Krypto

Action Comics #583, September 1986

EVERYTHING WAS GOING WRONG, FAST.

In this imaginary two-parter, Superman's "perfect" life fell apart. Clark Kent exposed as the Man of Steel. His school buddy Pete Ross dead at the hands of the Toyman and Prankster. The Legion of Super-Heroes from the 30th century pay their last respects to Superman.

But the moment that tears at our heartstrings is the death of Krypto, the Kryptonian Superdog. With the lethal Kryptonite Man—a murderer who oozed Kryptonite radiation—closing in on the Man of Steel, Krypto takes it upon himself to protect his master from certain death. Rabid mad, the canine claws and chews out the villain's throat only to succumb to Kryptonite radiation poisoning.

"I WAS WITH SUPERMAN WHEN HE HEARD HIS PET'S *DEATH-HOWL*, BUT WE COULDN'T *DO* ANYTHING..."

The worst part? Because Superman is busy trying to defeat the Legion of Super-Villains and the Brainiac/Luthor entity, he couldn't do anything but hear his pet's death howls.

20 Thor Threatens Loki's Head

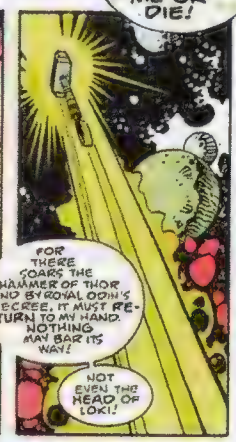
Thor #359, September 1985

THE KING WAS DEAD.

When Odin, the ruler of Asgard, disappeared after a grueling battle with the demon Surtur, it left Asgard's top slot vacant. Odin's son Thor is first in line for the throne, except for one small detail—he doesn't want it. Worse yet, he wants his evil stepbrother Loki to have it!

What's up with Thor? Enthralled by the beautiful, manipulative Lorelei, the Thunder God falls victim to a magic potion forcing him to follow her every command. And, of course, she and Loki are in cahoots to make Loki king!

But when Thor is commanded by Lorelei to watch her and Loki do the nasty, it's enough for Thor to resist her spell. Veins bursting in Thor's head, he grabs Loki by the throat and throws his enchanted mallet Mjolnir into the sky. Using every ounce of will power, the Thunder God reminds Loki that nothing will bar the hammer from returning to Thor's hand—not even Loki's head. Thor demands his stepbrother break the spell as the hammer scorches toward its destination. In trembling disbelief, Loki breaks the spell and Thor lets him go.



HAMMER-DOWN Thor holds Loki hostage until his spell is broken.

19 Cap Defies Thanos

Infinity Gauntlet #4, October 1991

IT WAS LIKE FIGHTING GOD. ONLY WORSE.

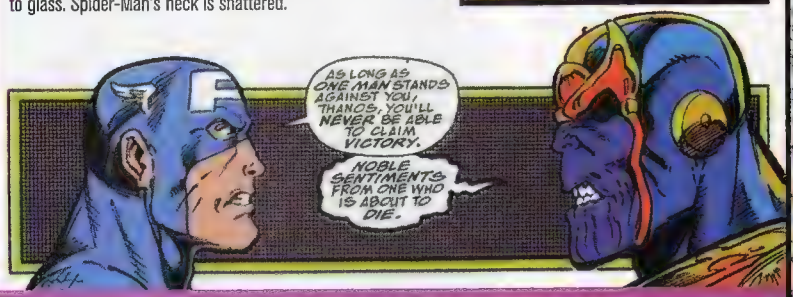
Half the universe was already dead at the hands of the death-obsessed Thanos, who gained omnipotence with the possession of the Infinity Gauntlet. The heroes of Earth muster one last attack: a suicide run to take out the madman.

One by one, Thanos claims the lives of the powerhouse heroes. Iron Man is decapitated. Thor is turned to glass. Spider-Man's neck is shattered.

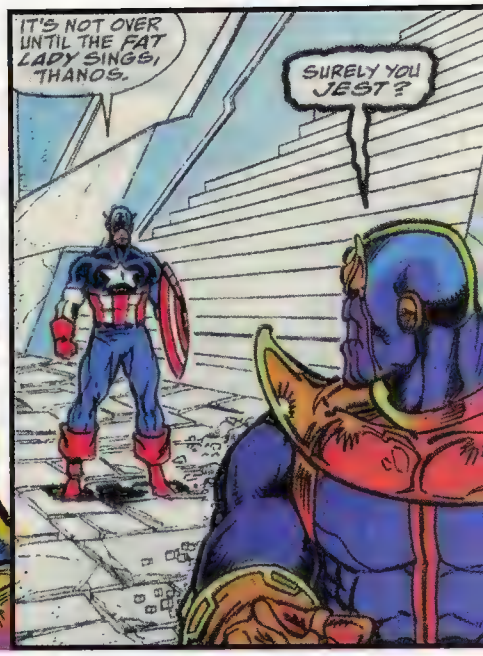
As the battlefield quiets, one man emerges from the carnage: Captain America. Quietly, the man without any superpowers does the unthinkable. Cap strides intensely toward the lunatic until he is face-to-face with Thanos.

"As long as *one man* stands against you, Thanos," says Cap, "you'll *never* be able to claim *victory*."

And he was right.



STAND-OFF Cap gets in the face of Thanos.



TIMBER! The FF and Avengers take Galactus down.

18 Galactus Falls

Fantastic Four #248, June 1982

GALACTUS HAD DONE A LOT OF THINGS before 1982: Devour planets. Obliterate billions of lives. Cause worlds to tremble at the mere mention of his name. But never before had Galactus been completely and utterly beaten.

Following his vengeance-driven herald Terrax to Earth, a hungry and weakened Galactus halted Terrax's carnage...but still needed to replenish his energies with Earth as his main course. Standing in his path were the FF, Avengers and Dr. Strange who tried to prevent the imminent catastrophe.

Thor's blows rattled Galactus. Iron Man's repulsor rays shook him. Dr. Strange cast a spell showing Galactus the ghosts of the zillions of lives he'd destroyed, forcing the gargantuan foe to literally scream! And then came the final blow: Catapulted by Mr. Fantastic, the Thing was rocketed right into Galactus' kisser. And the cosmic menace known as Galactus did the impossible...

Galactus fell.

17 Doom Outwits the Devil

Dr. Strange and Dr. Doom: Triumph and Torment, May 1989

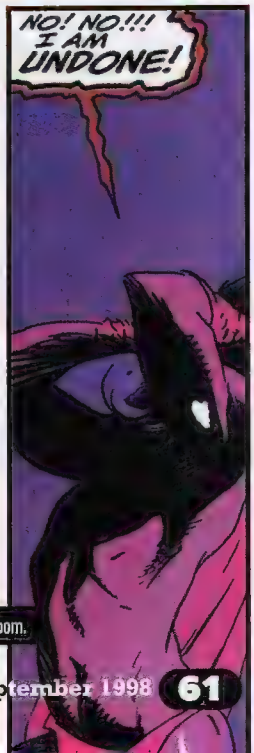
HE BEAT THE DEVIL AT HIS OWN GAME, and lost anyway.

But Dr. Doom is no ordinary loser. When Dr. Strange won the title of Sorcerer Supreme, his victory required him to grant one wish to his runner-up, Doom. His wish? To free his mother's soul from the grips of Mephisto, lord of Hell. Reluctantly, Strange agreed and the two entered Hell.

Separated, Doom would confront Mephisto, who agreed to free his mother's soul in exchange for another: Strange's. Without hesitation, Doom lured Strange into Mephisto's clutches.

But Doom's betrayal was a sham. Doom knew his mother would forsake him when she learned of his betrayal, that Strange would escape Mephisto and that his mother's tainted soul would be cleansed by spurning Doom's betrayal. And it was the heavenly light from his mother's redeemed soul that would ultimately defeat Mephisto.

But in saving his mother's soul, he lost what he always had: her love.



DOOMED Mephisto outwitted by Doctor Doom.

16 Reed Richards Learns His Baby Died

Fantastic Four #267, June 1984

IT WASN'T THE SCRAMBLE TO SAVE LIVES. Or the rampage of Dr. Octopus. No, the stunning impact of *Fantastic Four* #267 came from the final moment's painful humanity.

Suffering from radiation poisoning contracted from the Negative Zone, Sue Richards (a.k.a. the Invisible Girl) and her unborn child are both in danger of dying. When even the supergenius-level intellects of both her husband Reed Richards (Mr. Fantastic) and Bruce Banner (the Hulk) aren't enough, they turn to their superior in radiation science: the psychotic Dr. Octopus, now a patient in a mental ward.

Appealing to Octopus' benign scientist persona, Reed convinces the villain to help his wife and child...but not before Octopus is jarred back into his murderous persona and tries to kill Reed.

But after Reed finally convinces the villain to put aside his ego and help, they rush back to the hospital too late. In the issue's final, somber panel, surrounded by a thick black border, Reed learns that Sue lost the baby 30 minutes before.

TOO LATE Reed gets the news.

15 Morpheus Leaves Hell

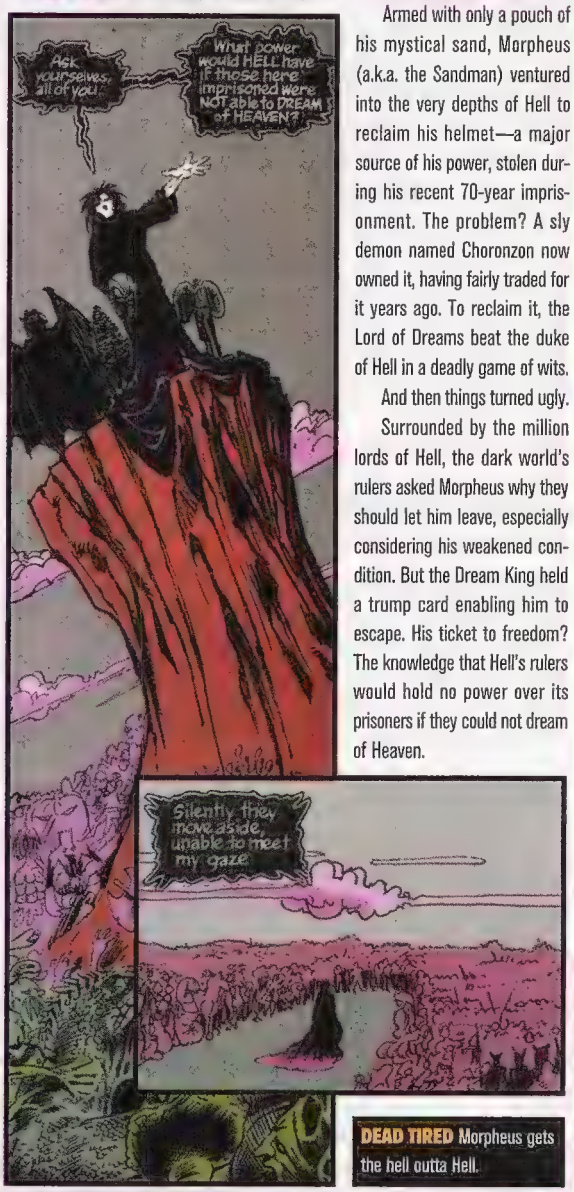
Sandman #4, April 1989

HE GAVE "GO TO HELL" A WHOLE NEW MEANING.

Armed with only a pouch of his mystical sand, Morpheus (a.k.a. the Sandman) ventured into the very depths of Hell to reclaim his helmet—a major source of his power, stolen during his recent 70-year imprisonment. The problem? A sly demon named Choronzon now owned it, having fairly traded for it years ago. To reclaim it, the Lord of Dreams beat the duke of Hell in a deadly game of wits.

And then things turned ugly.

Surrounded by the million lords of Hell, the dark world's rulers asked Morpheus why they should let him leave, especially considering his weakened condition. But the Dream King held a trump card enabling him to escape. His ticket to freedom? The knowledge that Hell's rulers would hold no power over its prisoners if they could not dream of Heaven.



DEAD TIRED Morpheus gets the hell outta Hell.

Return of Kid Miracleman 14

Miracleman #13, Nov. 1988

POOR JOHNNY BATES.

He's just a kid who wanted to enjoy the fun things in life. Thing is, Johnny has a deep, dark secret. By saying the word "Miracleman," he instantly transforms into the vicious, all-powerful villain Kid Miracleman (who is essentially England's version of DC's Captain Marvel Jr., except power ultimately corrupted this former hero). Anyway, Johnny knows that Kid Miracleman is trying to "get out" of his subconscious and all he has to do is say the word. But like we said, Johnny's a good kid and realizes the monstrous evil he'd unleash with that one simple word.

Then there were the other kids. They didn't like Johnny. The thugs picked on him. Beat him up. But Johnny can take their insults, can take being teased and pranked. But when the other kids start to rape him, he surrenders to his subconscious and Kid Miracleman is at last freed...

EVIL UNLEASHED Kid Miracleman exacts a horrific price on his captors.

13 Superman To Mongul: 'Burn.'

Superman Annual #11, June 1985

KRYPTON NEVER EXPLODED. Kal-El was happily married with two loving kids. And the Phantom Zone criminals were still safely locked up. Yep, no worries.

So what was the problem? Well, none of it was real. It's all going on inside Superman's mind, thanks to a li'l birthday present from the alien tyrant Mongul. Called a "black mercy," the plant attaches itself to a host and feeds off its victim's bio-aura, while offering them their heart's desires.

So when Superman realizes something is wrong with his "perfect" world, he forces himself to wake up, says a heartwrenching goodbye to his son and then set his sights on the massive Mongul. And you've never seen Superman angry (we mean REALLY angry) until you've seen Big Blue crank up the juice on Mongul snarling one word: "Burn."

SUPER-MAD The Man of Steel gets medieval on Mongul's ass.

12 Elektra Dies

Daredevil #181, April 1982

LOVE'S A KILLER.

In this case, a killer assassin named Elektra, the former lover of Matt Murdock (a.k.a. Daredevil). In a year-long build-up, Elektra finally climbs to the top of the crimelord Kingpin's organization as his No. 1 assassin. And that doesn't sit well with Kingpin's *former* No. 1 assassin, Bullseye.

After a quick escape from prison, Bullseye hunts down Elektra and soon finds himself fighting one of the world's deadliest killers. After taking a few hits and slices, Bullseye gives Elektra a serious throat wound and then rocks fandom with a panel that spawned thousands of hate letters. In a time when the death of a popular character was a rarity, Bullseye grabbed Elektra's sai and ran her through.

Crawling from the bloody scene, Elektra took those mortal wounds and made her way to DD's apartment, only to die in his arms.

STICK A FORK IN 'ER She's done. Bullseye runs Elektra through.

11 Thunderbolts Revealed as Masters of Evil

Thunderbolts #1, April 1997

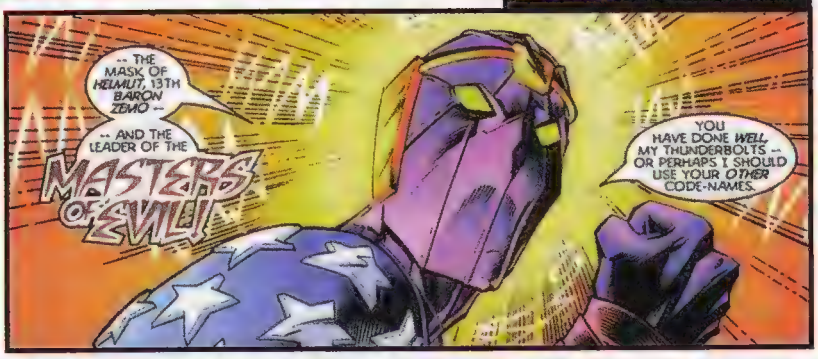
IT WAS ALL PART OF THE MASTER PLAN.

Just when jaded fans figured there were no more surprises in comics anymore thanks to solicitation catalogs and fan magazines, along came *Thunderbolts* #1.

Sure, the book was promoted as "the next *Avengers*" with "all-new heroes." Yeah, we'd heard it all before. But what wasn't said was who they *really* were!

With the Avengers and Fantastic Four presumed dead after the "Onslaught" crossover, the T-Bolts made its public debut by beating up on a horde of baddies, becoming the new media darlings. Kicking back in a modest H.Q., reveling in victory, the T-Bolt's leader Citizen V removes his mask, revealing himself to be...Baron Zemo?!? And the rest of his team? The Masters of Evil! Look out world...

MASQUERADE The Thunderbolts unveiled!



10 Gwen Stacy Dies

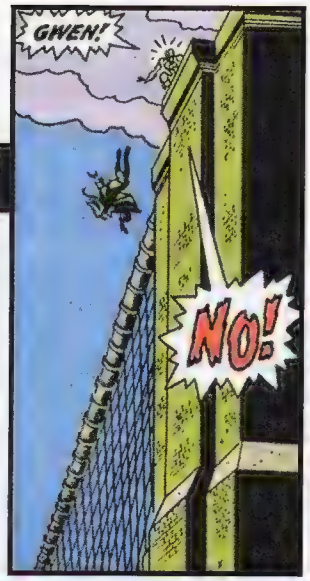
Amazing Spider-Man #121, June 1973

THINGS LOOKED GRIM FROM THE START.

There was a cover tease announcing someone close to Spider-Man was going to die. The title was purposely concealed until the last page. And the hype of a "surprise" supervillain was surely going to complicate things further. All of which tied into Spider-Man's most devastating moment in *Amazing Spider-Man* #121: the murder of his longtime girlfriend Gwen Stacy.

It started when Norman Osborn's mind snapped and he became the Green Goblin once again. Plotting revenge against Peter Parker (Osborn knew Pete's secret identity), he kidnaps Gwen to bait a flu-ridden Spider-Man. The Goblin's trail leads to the Brooklyn Bridge, where he and Spidey have at it...but not before the Goblin knocks Gwen off the bridge! Spidey dashes off a webline to halt her descent, but the combination of the fall and a snap of her neck ends her life.

"You *killed* the woman I love," screams the web-slinger, waving a vengeful fist at the Goblin. "And for that, you're going to DIE!"



FALL FROM GRACE It was a side of Spider-Man we'd never seen before.

SURPRISE Barbara and the readers never saw it coming.

9 Batgirl Shot

Batman: The Killing Joke, June 1988

IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST EVIL ACTS EVER committed and NO ONE saw it coming. As Commissioner Gordon and his daughter Barbara (Batgirl) enjoy a quiet evening at home, a knock comes at the door. Barbara opens it and—without a single word balloon, narrative box or sound effect—the Joker shoots her through the midsection, sending her recoiling through a glass coffee table and paralyzing her from the waist down for life. All this done without any foreshadowing or clues, and in the end, even the Joker had little clue to the full extent of his crime: he had just ended Batgirl's career.

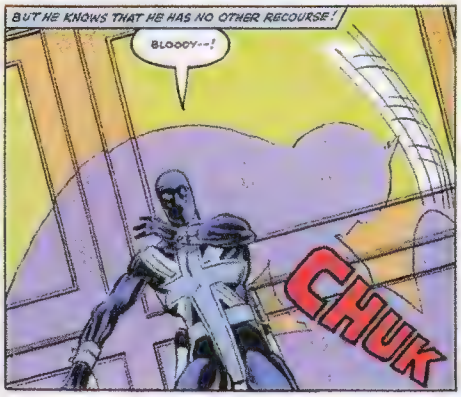
8 Cap Decapitates Baron Blood

Captain America #254, February 1980

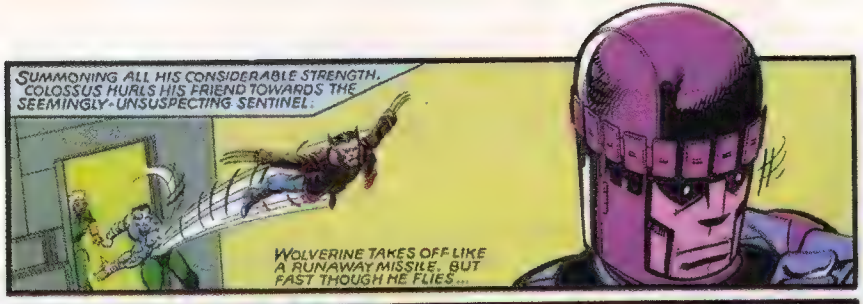
CAPTAIN AMERICA...MURDERER?

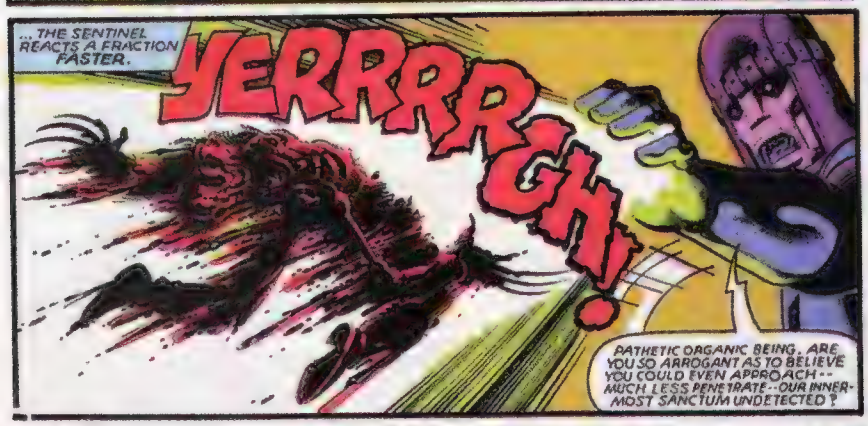
Traveling to England at the request of his old Invaders comrade Union Jack, Cap learns that his ancient enemy Baron Blood—the Nazi Vampire—is on the loose. Eventually confronting and engaging the villain, a battered Captain America gains the advantage over his foe...only to witness the sun beginning to set.

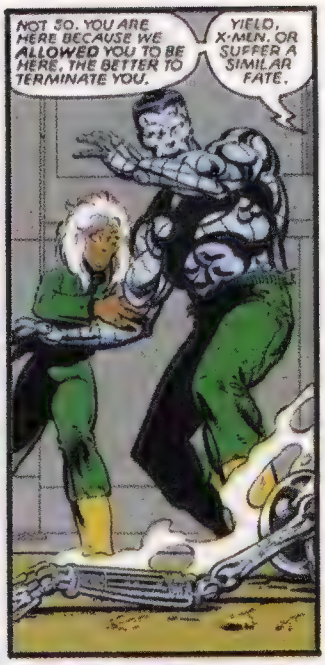
With the Baron's strength rapidly increasing with the encroaching darkness, Cap knows that to save the innocents around him, he must immediately find a way to stop the creature. Out of options, Cap recalls what he knows of vampires and grabs his shield. He pauses momentarily at the thought of the gruesome act he must perform, and brings the edge of the shield down across the vampire's neck, decapitating him. Cap did what he had to do, but it didn't mean he had to like it.



DRASTIC MEASURES Captain America had no choice.







7 Wolverine...Dead! (Uncanny X-Men #42, February 1969)

TONITE'S FASTBALL SPECIAL: Well-done Wolverine

THE X-MEN ARE PRISONERS. Magneto is wheelchair-bound. And Wolverine is a guerrilla freedom fighter.

The year is 2013 and the robotic Sentinels rule North America, eliminating any mutant or superhero who pose a threat. Some X-Men survive, living in concentration camps. With the Soviets ready to nuke the Sentinels, the captive mutants hatch a plot to prevent this nightmarish future by sending one of their own into the past to halt the event that sparks it. But, in case it fails, the rest of the X-Men escape and attempt to take out the Sentinels' Manhattan H.Q, formerly the Fantastic Four's Baxter Building.

The small team of Wolverine, Storm and Colossus invade the H.Q. and take out the sentries first. Next stop: the building's inner sanctum on the top floor.

The elevator door opens to reveal that all that stands in the X-Men's way is a lone Sentinel guarding the central computer. Without hesitation, Colossus launches Wolverine at the last Sentinel, hoping to gut it.

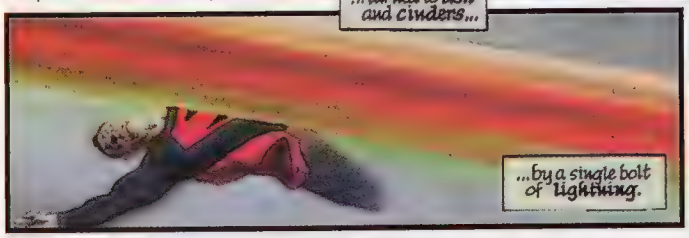
But the Sentinel is faster. It turns and incinerates Wolverine's flesh from his adamantium skeleton while in mid-air.

"Yield, X-Men," says the icy robot. "Or suffer a similar fate."

6 Captain Marvel Arrives at the Gulag (Kingdom Come #3, July 1996)

HUMANITY WAS SCREWED.

The good guys are bad. The bad guys are badder. And Lex Luthor's still plotting world domination in this potential DC future. Worst of all is the wild card in the mix: Captain Marvel, who's either a plant inside Luthor's camp...or Luthor's secret weapon.



Setting things right is Superman, who ends his 10-year exile and reforms the Justice League to put these violent heroes and villains into a super-prison called the Gulag. But when riots in the prison soon break out, we learn about Marvel's intentions—he's Luthor's brainwashed enforcer.

As Superman races to halt the riot, Luthor orders Marvel to break out the unruly Gulag inmates to crush the incoming Justice League. But when Superman is in sight of the Gulag, he's not only too late, but is also slammed out of the sky by a streak of red and gold.

Standing over him at ground level is the younger, more powerful Marvel itching for the next round.

READY TO RUMBLE Superman is outclassed by Captain Marvel.

5 Spidey Discovers Burglar That Killed Uncle Ben *Amazing Fantasy #15, August 1962*

WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. Spider-Man learned this the hard way.

After gaining his spider-powers, Peter Parker dons a costume and does what every American with special talents does: he becomes a TV celebrity! But his newfound fame would give the persecuted teen a false sense of importance as he casually lets a burglar escape, claiming it's the police's job to do that sort of thing.

Peter would return home, ironically, to find a police car outside it. He's told his Uncle Ben has been shot and murdered. In a rage, Peter puts his costume on and catches the burglar...and discovers the robber is the same criminal he failed to stop mere hours earlier! Floored by this revelation, Peter dedicates his life to using his abilities responsibly as Spider-Man.

Etched into Spider-Man lore, this moment would change Peter's life forever. No matter how heroic his efforts, Peter would always be haunted by the memory of his uncle's death.

LIVE AND LEARN Peter Parker learns a painful lesson.

4 Wolverine Emerges From Sewer *Uncanny X-Men #32, April 1979*

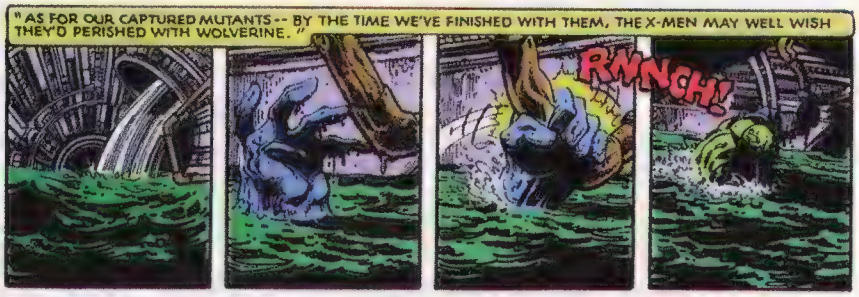
ONCE A MONTH.

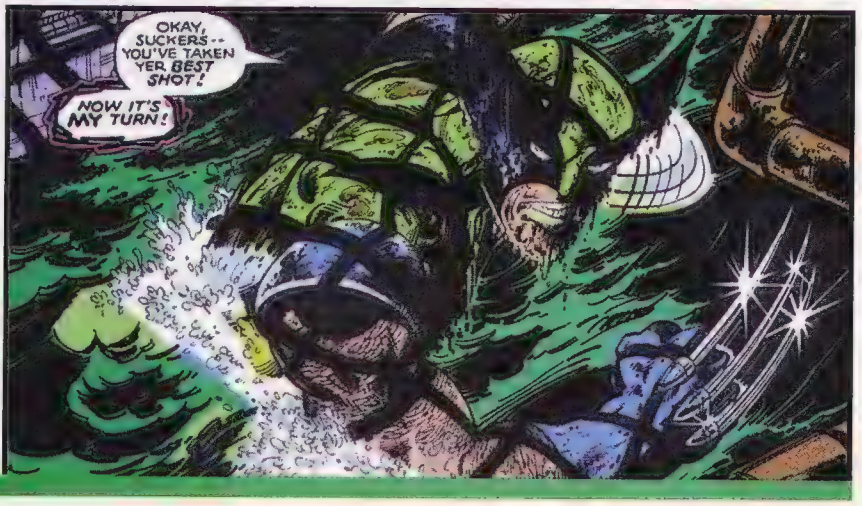
It's hard to believe, by today's standards, that's how many times in 1979 that fans could pick up a comic with Wolverine in it. But at the time, the furry mutant was just starting to come into his own. Fans liked his merciless sense of justice and scrappy attitude.

So you didn't know what to expect when he and the X-Men were ambushed by the Hellfire Club's Inner Circle. One by one, the X-Men fell. Jean Grey joined the enemy. Wolverine was smashed through five floors of the club and swept away into the rapids of the New York City sewers.

The X-Men held captive, one of the Hellfire Club joked that the X-Men'll wish they perished with Wolverine...

But in the issue's last panels, a battered hand emerged from the flowing sewer water grabbing a pipe and revealing a grimy and exhausted Wolverine. "You've taken yer best shot! Now it's MY turn!"





TIDY-BOWL MAN! Always a man of his word, Wolverine makes good on his promise. (Look out, Hellfire Club!)

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3 Phoenix Kills Herself

Uncanny X-Men #137, September 1979

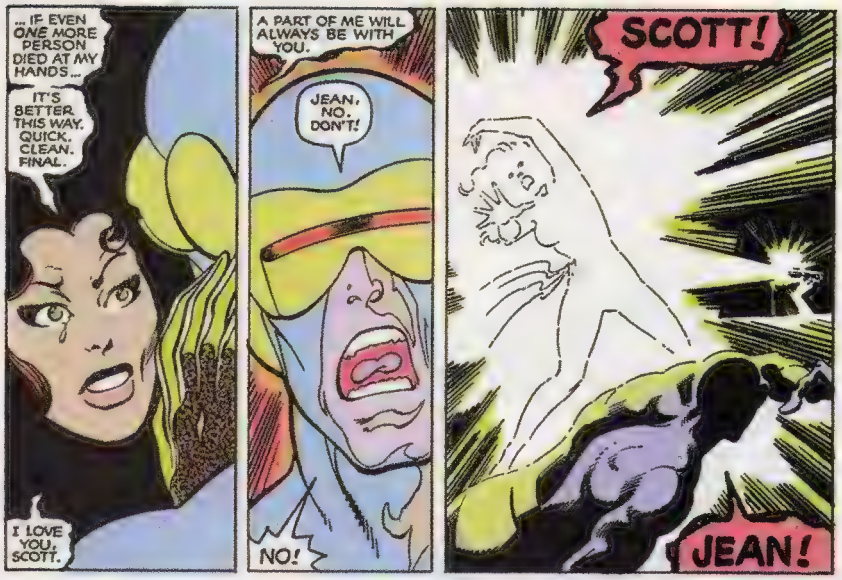
SHE HAD TO DIE.

There was no other way around it. When the mind of Jean Grey (a.k.a. Phoenix) was tampered with by the villain Mastermind, her vast powers turned corrupt, transforming Jean into a force of pure evil calling itself Dark Phoenix.

To sustain its immense power, Dark Phoenix devoured an entire sun, snuffing out billions of alien lives. Its next target: Earth. And that's when the X-Men stepped in and shut down the corrupt persona of Dark Phoenix. The threat was over. Cyclops proposed to Jean. And then it all fell apart...

Teleported to the flagship of the Shi'ar empire, Jean was sentenced to death for her actions as Dark Phoenix. The X-Men quickly challenged the Shi'ar Imperial Guard for Jean's life, but fell one by one. With only Jean and Cyclops left standing, the Dark Phoenix persona remanifested itself and began a path of destruction. Knowing she'd never be free of the evil entity, Jean fought the X-Men to drain her powers and ultimately cornered herself and Cyclops in a empty facility on the moon.

Tears in her eyes, Jean said goodbye to her beloved and fired a cannon upon herself, atomizing her.



SHE'S TOAST Aw, don't sweat it, Cyke. She'll be revived in a few years, buddy.

2 Ozymandias Victorious

Watchmen #11, August 1987

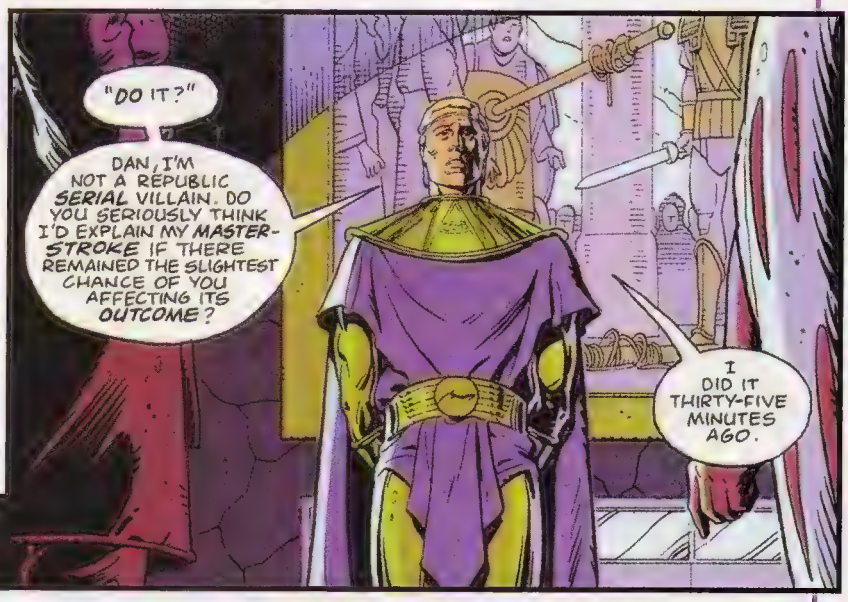
IT WAS A CONSPIRACY FROM THE START.

The government agent Comedian was murdered. The god-like Dr. Manhattan left Earth when accused of giving cancer to people. The vigilante Rorschach was framed and imprisoned.

All these acts were put into place for one purpose: to save a world on the brink of World War III by creating a common enemy for both the U.S. and Soviets, namely space aliens. The man behind it all? Retired hero Adrian Veidt, a.k.a. Ozymandias. Veidt manufactured an "alien being," removed his enemies from the picture, and was ultimately going to teleport the "alien" into the heart of Manhattan, instantly killing itself and half the city in the process.

But when fellow hero Nite Owl breaks Rorschach out of prison, they discover Veidt's behind the conspiracy and confront him. Veidt defeats them with ease and details his heinous hoax. Laughing at the absurdity of it, Nite Owl asks, "When were you planning to *do* it?"

"'*Do* it?'" Veidt says, straight-faced. "I did it 35 minutes ago."



THE BEST-LAID PLANS Smarter than the average villain, Ozymandias doesn't reveal his apocalyptic scheme until it's too late to stop.

WHO IS THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER?
ALIEN?
A NEW MONTHLY SERIES
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OUCH To beat Superman, all Batman needed was some synthetic Kryptonite and high-tech cleats.

1 Batman Beats Superman

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns #4, August 1986

CAN THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL MAN BEAT ITS CLEVEREST FIGHTER?

We find out big-time in the fourth issue of Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns*, telling the story of a grizzled, out-of-retirement Batman, trying to clean up a very dirty world, one criminal at a time.

His "purification" includes putting Two-Face back in Arkham Asylum, toppling the Mutant street gang terrorizing Gotham City, and permanently ridding the world of the Joker. But when Batman's volatile return makes the wrong type of waves in Washington, D.C., the president wants the Dark Knight taken down. And to do it, he uses the U.S. government's priceless weapon: Superman.

Expecting the inevitable confrontation, Batman takes control of the situation right from the start. Wearing high-tech armor, Bats bombards the incoming Superman with firepower only a large fortune could supply. For starters, Batman stymies Supes with air-to-air missiles. Then came Robin's turn, using a blast from her Bat-tank to stagger Big Blue.

But that doesn't stop Superman, who swoops toward Batman, lit only by a streetlight. Bats unleashes a shot from his sonic blaster, giving the Man of Steel a nosebleed. Grabbing hold of Superman's head, Bats jolts him with Gotham's entire electrical supply, courtesy of the streetlight the Dark Knight's hooked up to. It isn't until Supes endures a splash of acid and a thermite grenade to his face that he *starts* to get angry.

But it was all just a stall tactic as Batman awaited the arrival of his secret weapon: a synthesized Kryptonite arrow courtesy of a one-armed Green Arrow. The arrow strikes Superman, severely draining his powers. Batman moves in for the kill, pounding away at Superman, even as his own heart begins to give out.

"I want you to *remember*, Clark," Batman thinks to himself, as he chokes the life out of Superman, "in all the years to come...in your most *private* moments. I want you to *remember* my *hand* at your *throat*...I want you to remember the one man who *beat* you..."

The Man of Steel falls. And so does the Dark Knight.

The Wizard *Staff would really LIKE to forget that bent-over, sucking-wind feeling from those old schoolyard days...*

PUNCH LINES

COMICS' 10 FUNNIEST MOMENTS

10. Lobo vs. Santa Claus

The Lobo Paramilitary Christmas Special

When the Easter Bunny hires Lobo to kill Santa Claus, the Main Man's only too happy to oblige. After a machete duel to the death, Christmas will never be the same.

9. Hitman Pukes on Batman

***Hitman* #1**

After a nice Indian curry dinner, Tommy Monaghan meets Batman, who cleans the hitman's clock. And then, well...Tommy pukes on the Caped Crusader.

8. Spidey in the Suburbs

***Amazing Spider-Man* #267**

While tracking a common thief, Spidey faces his biggest foe: suburbia! With no trees or tall buildings to swing from, Web-head's gotta deal with under-sexed housewives, a citizen's patrol and rude dogs.

7. The Hulk's Two Wishes

The Incredible Hulk and the Thing: The Big Change

Offered two wishes while on an alien planet, the Thing considers world peace, while the Hulk says, "We want food and want to go home." Seconds later, they're on Earth atop a mountain of hamburgers.

6. The Death of Ant-Man

***Fred Hembeck Destroys the Marvel Universe* #1**

After getting soaked and knocked unconscious by the Water Wizard, Ant-Man's doom awaits. A nice old lady scoops him up and tries dryin' him in the microwave. POP!

5. Batman KOs Guy Gardner

***Justice League* #5**

Jerk that he is, Guy Gardner challenges Batman to a fight for leadership of the Justice League. The result? A one-panel fight that doesn't go well for Mr. Gardner.

4. Rick Jones' Bachelor Party

***Incredible Hulk* #417**

When his superhero pals throw him a bachelor party, Rick faces the terror of...the Ecdysiast! Turns out Captain America hired her, thinking she was a magician. Not quite. (Look it up.)

3. God vs. The Devil

***Savage Dragon* #31**

It was funny enough when God started dukin' it out with Satan, but we ripped our stitches when Satan started fightin' dirty. Yep, he kicked God in the yahoos.

2. Thor Turns Into a Frog

***Thor* #365**

Loki's latest scheme? Turn Thor into a frog. But after finding his sacred hammer Mjolnir, Thor transformed into...the Frog of Thunder!

1. Father D'aronique's Death

***Preacher* #24**

When Starr shoves the bloated Allfather out of a helicopter, his shadow looms over two more soon-to-be victims: the inbred descendant of Jesus Christ and a soldier. In an uncharacteristic moment of clarity moments before impact, the savior turns to the soldier and says, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The soldier's response? "Great." ■

CASTING call

WIZARD casts the DANGER GIRL MOVIE!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

Think women are the weaker sex? Say that to the luscious female spies in Danger Girl and you'll be gumming applesauce for the rest of your life. These women line their pockets with intrigue, collect loose change in a purse made from unadulterated mayhem, and butter their bread with enough danger to choke a medium-sized horse.

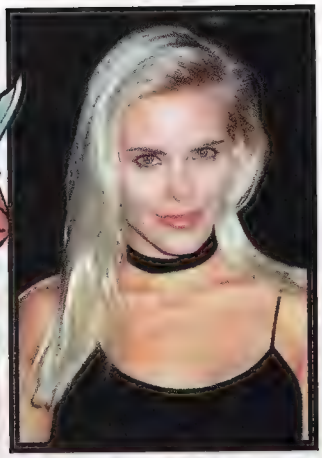
Whether it's in the arena of espionage or the box office (for the "Danger Girl" movie, naturally), these four femmes have enough muscle to move mountains. If they ever made a "Danger Girl" picture, spy satellites across the world would register intense crowd activity at theaters worldwide.

And who could blame 'em? The film would have beautiful women, creepy villains, guns, gadgets and great action. Why, it'd be like a super-sexy James Bond movie...back when the series was good, that is.

So bring your decoder ring. We'll be in the back row with the plans for the X-38 space cannon.

CHARLIZE THERON as ABBEY CHASE

Female adventurer-turned-spy Abbey Chase could steal the mole from Cindy Crawford's face without gettin' caught. We suspect Charlize Theron ("The Devil's Advocate") would do much stealing of the "Danger Girl" spotlight.



GENA LEE NOLAN as NATALIA KASSLE

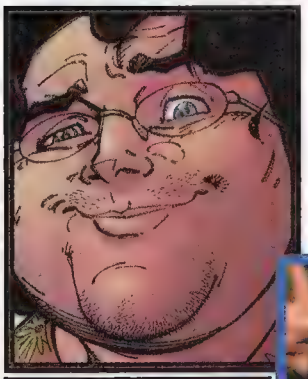
If wishes were fishes, we'd have a carp. And ask it to let "Baywatch" bombshell Gena Lee Nolan apply her seductive acting style to Russian Danger Girl Natalia Kassle.

ELIZABETH HURLEY as SYDNEY SAVAGE

Let us all pay homage to the leather suit and speak no more on why supermodel Liz Hurley ("Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery") is exceedingly perfect to portray Australian Sydney Savage.

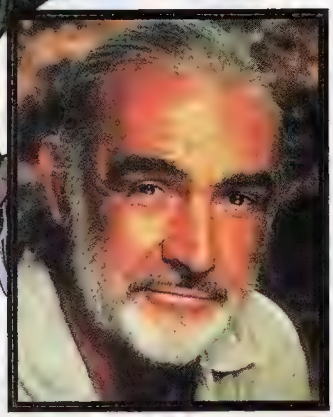
CLAIRE DANES as SILICON VALERIE

Acne. Teen angst. Awkwardness. Claire Danes' ("Romeo + Juliet") characters excel at all three. If hacker and Danger-teen Valerie is gonna leap to life, we want Danes donning her Clearisil.



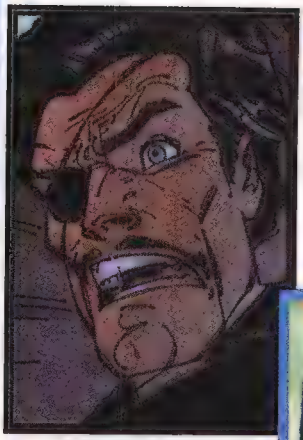
DAN SCHNEIDER as DUNCAN

There's a good chance that swollen Danger Girl ally Duncan is often mistaken for his real-life buddy Dan Schneider from TV's "Head of the Class."



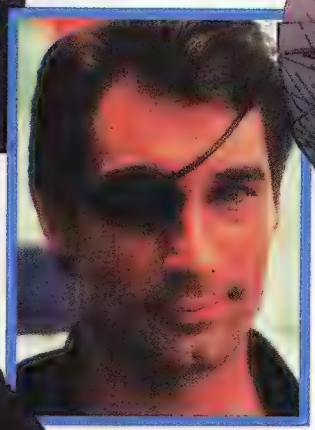
SEAN CONNERY as DEUCE

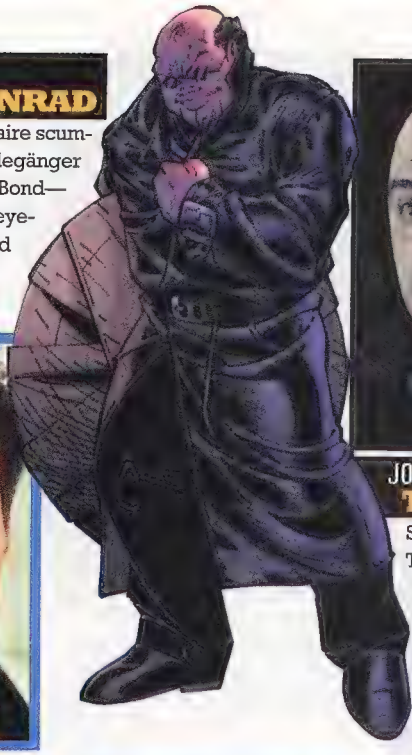
Once, Sean Connery ("The Rock") played a spy named James Bond...and then, oh heck, just look at the picture! Connery *is* Danger Girl leader Deuce or we're *duck l'orange*.



TIMOTHY DALTON as DONAVIN CONRAD

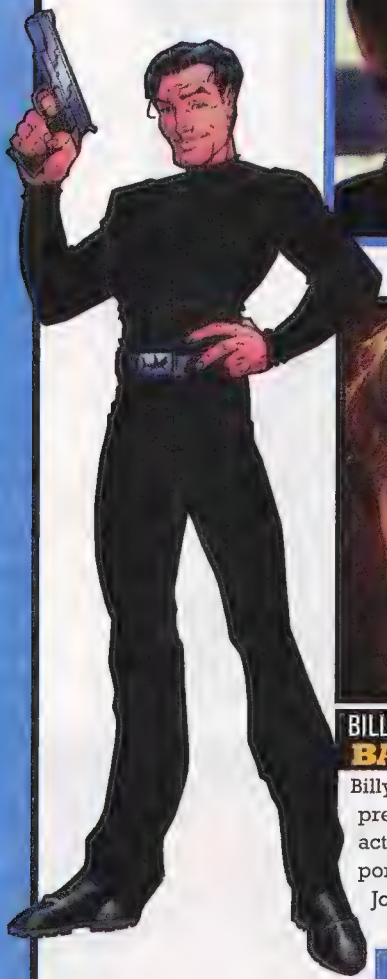
Donavin Conrad, debonaire scumbag, has a real-life dopplegänger in another former James Bond—Timothy Dalton. Slap an eyepatch on Dalton (as he did in "Brenda Starr") and Conrad's complete.

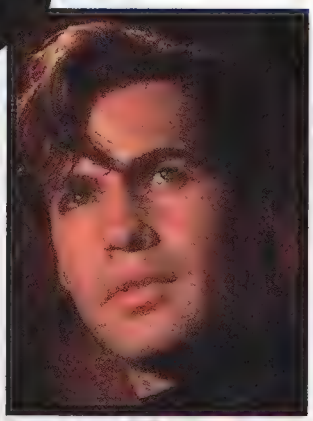




JON POLITO as THE PEACH

Skunky arms dealer The Peach is rotten to the pit. Jon Polito from "Miller's Crossing" and "The Crow" plays skunky better than Pepe Le Pew!



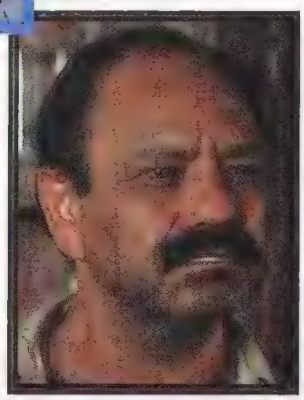


BILLY ZANE as JOHNNY BARRACUDA

Billy Zane ("Titanic") is the pretty-boy's pretty boy, with acting talent aplenty to portray spy guy Johnny Barracuda.

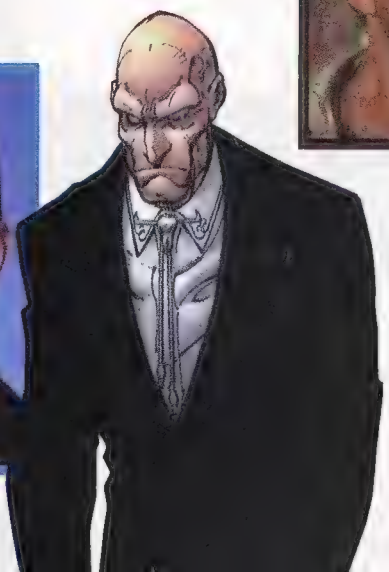
CHEECH MARIN as KID DYNAMO

Talk about overcompensating—this so-called "Dynamo" is actually a chain-smoking evil *midget*. Oh, yeah. We'll let Cheech Marin ("From Dusk Till Dawn") lend his face and voice to the role, but let special effects handle Dynamo's shrunken torso.



RICHARD MOLL as MR. GIGGLES

Robotic villain Mr. Giggles is about as much fun as ceramic tile. To play this bald, humorless fiend, we'd enlist the aid of bald straight-man Richard Moll from TV's "Night Court."



QUIET ON THE SET! tv

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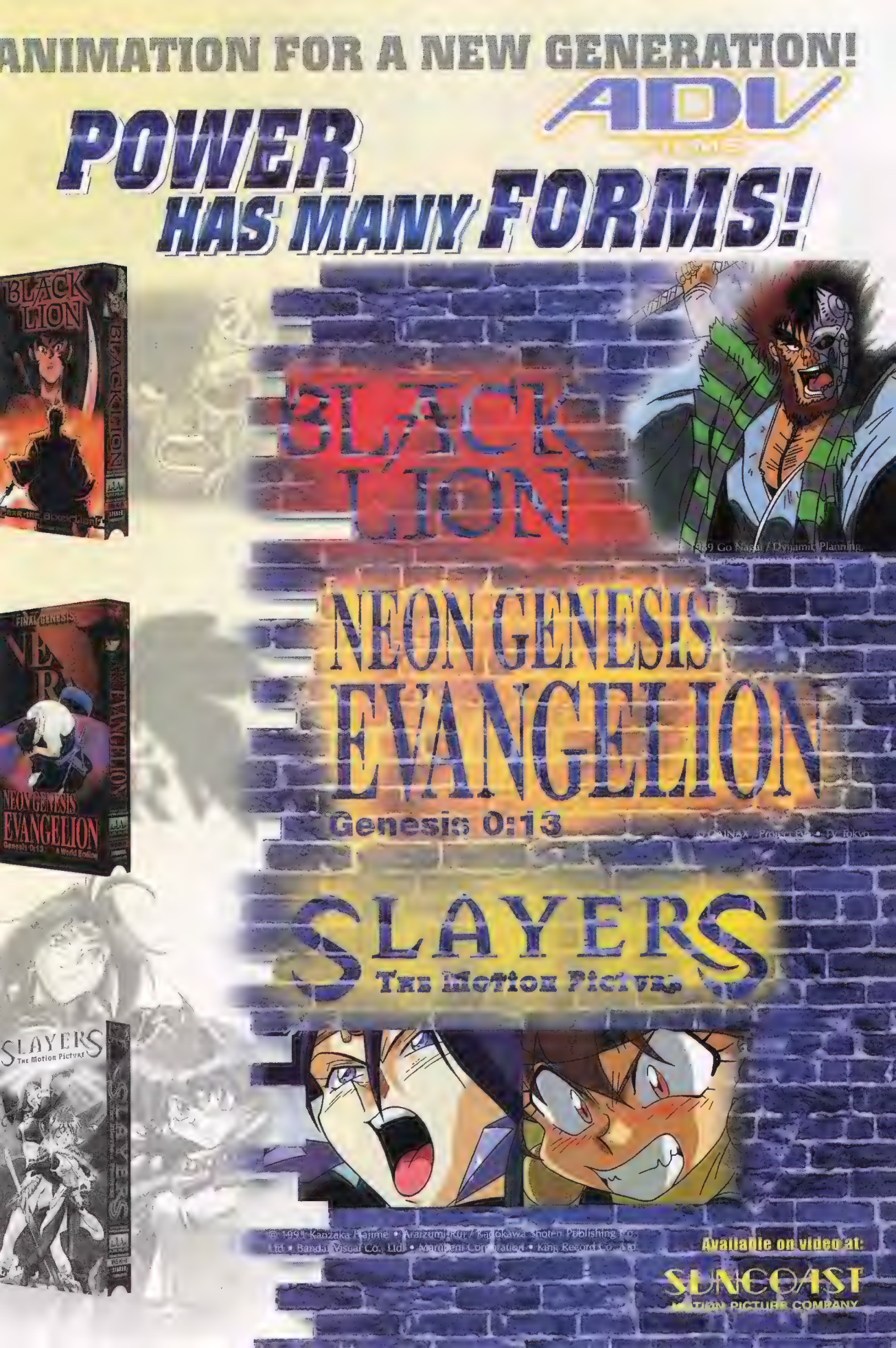
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'98 FALL PREVIEW

A guide to next season's animated TV series

THE AVENGERS (in early stages of development at Fox) It looks like the Avengers won't be assemblin' any time soon. Now that Marvel's long-term development deal with Fox Kids' is up in the air, the embryonic plans for an "Avengers" series to follow a "Captain America" series have been put on indefinite hold. A representative from Fox declined to speculate on "Avengers," but left the door open for the future if Marvel can settle its bankruptcy problems.

BATMAN (WB, 7th season) New episodes of the animated Dark Knight will air this fall on Saturdays at 10 a.m., with reruns airing weekday afternoons. Besides an adaptation of the award-winning *Batman: Mad Love* comic detailing Harley Quinn's origin, look for an episode providing three different interpretations of the Dark Knight, including one in a Frank Miller *Dark Knight* style.

BATMAN BEYOND (WB, **NEW**) Terry McGinnis (voiced by Will Friedle of "Boy Meets World") is the 17-year-old Tomorrow Knight for a 21st century Gotham City, while a 70-year-old Bruce Wayne (voiced by Kevin Conroy) acts as Terry's mentor. The Tomorrow Knight's main nemesis, Derek Powers is a shrewd businessman who also harbors a secret: when he fought the original Batman years before, he was exposed to a nerve gas that transformed him. Now, known as the Blight, Powers must wear and replenish a layer of artificial skin once every 24 hours to shield his luminescent skin from the public.

"Batman Beyond" airs 9 a.m. on Saturday mornings.

BIG DEAL Dark Horse Comics' Big Guy (above) and Rusty the Boy Robot are set to make it big on the small screen.

THE BIG GUY AND RUSTY THE BOY ROBOT Dark Horse and Sony Pictures are developing a series derived from the 1995 Frank Miller/Geof Darrow comic book of the same name to air next fall.

CAPTAIN AMERICA (stuck in development at Fox) "All Marvel series are currently on hold until Marvel clears bankruptcy," was the official word from the studio, leaving the next animated Marvel project in limbo.

DILBERT (UPN, premieres Jan. '99) Cartoonist Scott Adams' overworked office clerk (voiced by Daniel Stern) and his company cohorts hit prime time with 13 half-hour episodes. UPN would neither confirm nor deny the rumor Chris Elliott is out as the voice of Dogbert.

UP AT BAT Harley Quinn's origin and the *Dark Knight*!

HOLLYWOOD AND TV STUFF THAT YOU CARE ABOUT

ons

DOCTOR FILES David Duchovny (above) gets animated this season on "Dr. Katz."

DR. KATZ, PROFESSIONAL THERAPIST (Comedy Central, 5th season) The first of 13 new episodes began airing in June. Some of the characters getting analyzed by the good doctor this season include David Duchovny ("The X-Files"), Denis Leary ("Small Soldiers") and Gilbert Gottfried ("Aladdin").

FUTURAMA (Fox, premiering in Sept. '99) "Simpsons" creator Matt Groening's new series follows the adventures of Fry, a human from our time thawed out 1,000 years in the future. Thirteen half-hour episodes have been green-lighted so far.

GODZILLA (Fox, **NEW**) When a new Godzilla is born, Nick Tatopoulos (voiced by Ian Ziering of "Beverly Hills 90210") and company chase it and other mega-sized monsters across the globe. The first of 40 episodes will launch this fall on Saturdays and then move to weekdays in early 1999.

INCREDIBLE HULK & FRIENDS (UPN, reruns) UPN will continue airing the first two seasons of "Incredible Hulk" but will now mix in episodes from its "Iron Man" and "Fantastic Four" series. The half-hour show will air Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

INVASION AMERICA (WB, premiered June '98) No decision has been made yet about turning the sci-fi mini-series into an ongoing series.

KING OF THE HILL (Fox, 3rd season) For the first few episodes of the new season, the show's producers will continue playing with the idea of moving the Hill family from Texas to Hollywood, but they're refusing to spill the beans as to where the family will finally end up. Twenty-four new episodes will begin airing in September on the show's new night, Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MEN IN BLACK: THE SERIES (WB, 2nd season) Even though there's only talk of a movie sequel, 13 new episodes have been ordered for the popular series which is now moving to Kids' WB on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

MICRONAUTS: THE NEW VOYAGES (syndicated, debuting in 1999) The classic toy line returns in a new two-hour movie to air in the first part of next year on the Sci-Fi Channel, with a 26-episode series airing next fall. Both new and familiar characters (Baron Karza, for one) will appear in the CGI (computer generated imagery) series.

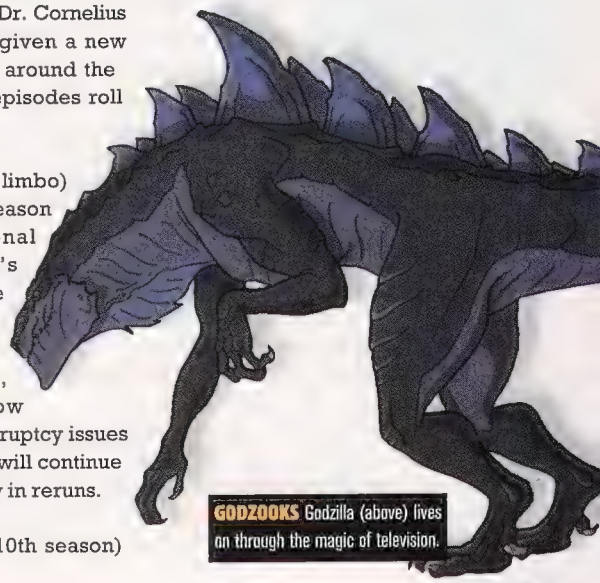
ROBOCOP: ALPHA COMMANDO (syndicated, **NEW**) Brought out of mothballs by his creator Dr. Cornelius Neumeier, Robocop is given a new mission: to stop villains around the globe. Forty half-hour episodes roll out this fall.

SILVER SURFER (Fox, in limbo) Even though the first season was a hit, no additional episodes of Marvel's space-soarin' hero have been ordered. Fox maintains it hasn't made a final decision, preferring to see how Marvel resolves its bankruptcy issues first. It's unknown if Fox will continue to re-broadcast the show in reruns.

THE SIMPSONS (Fox, 10th season) Twenty-four new episodes will air this season including a new "Treehouse of Horror" guest-starring Jerry Springer, Ed McMahon and Regis and Kathy Lee. "D'oh in the Wind" sees Homer revert to his hippie days (with a little help from guest voices Martin Mull and George Carlin). And "Mayored to the Mob" brings Mayor Quimby and his goodfellas to the forefront—featuring a cameo by Mark Hamill in a scene at a sci-fi convention.

SOUTH PARK (Comedy Central, 2nd season) Matt Stone and Trey Parker are so busy writing and animating new episodes of Comedy Central's smash hit that the studio is literally finding out each episode's premise the week before it airs. Since the series has been renewed up to the year 2000, you can probably expect to see Kenny die many, many more times between now and then. Not to mention a feature-length movie from Paramount Pictures, is scheduled for spring 1999.

SPAWN (HBO, 2nd season began May '98) A second season of new episodes began airing this past May. Expect the next six in late '98/early '99. As for what the new series holds, look for more explanations of Spawn's powers, and his place in the battle between Heaven and Hell. Besides taking a more supernatural turn, the series will mix in more "NYPD Blue"-like detective scenes, including a cliff-hanger where private detective Twitch gets shot in the head. Spawny guy himself will start learning how to change his form—including reverting back to Al Simmons—and a Genghis Khan war mask will show up,



GODZOOKS Godzilla (above) lives on through the magic of television.

possessing the power of Hell. As for guest voices, listen up for such stars as Robert Forster ("Jackie Brown"), James Hong ("Blade Runner"), Jennifer Jason Leigh ("Single White Female") and Ming-Na Wenn ("Mulan"). And, in case you missed it on HBO, the second home-video collection of "Spawn" is scheduled for August in both unrated ($22.97) and a PG-13 ($14.98) versions.

SPIDER-MAN (UPN, reruns) UPN has acquired the rights to air all 65 episodes of the Wall-crawler as part of its new Sunday lineup at 10:30 a.m.

SUPERMAN (WB, 3rd season) New episodes will air directly after "Batman" on Saturday mornings along with reruns weekday afternoons. The Legion of Super-Heroes (Melissa Joan Hart of ABC's "Sabrina" voices Saturn Girl), Green Lantern, Sinestro and Captain Marvel will all make appearances along with the return of Supergirl. Look for it Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

THE TICK (Comedy Central, reruns) Spoon! The series will continue to air weekends on Comedy Central.

X-MEN (UPN, reruns) The network has acquired the rights to broadcast the Fox Kids series beginning Sundays this fall at 10 a.m. ■ *Patrick Sauriol*

ON 'THE MARK'

Liefeld project reunites 'ID4' team of Smith, Devlin and Emmerich

Rob Liefeld is ready to get jiggy with **Will Smith**. Liefeld's comic book concept "The Mark" is scheduled to begin shooting by Universal Pictures in late 1998/early 1999. The film will reunite the successful "Independence Day" team of Smith and producers **Dean Devlin** and **Roland Emmerich**.

MARK-ED MAN Will Smith is set to star as Mike Collins (above).

Smith, who Liefeld credits as the driving force behind the project, is scheduled to star and produce the film, while the "Godzilla" team of Devlin and Emmerich will serve as executive producers. Liefeld wrote the initial screenplay and was paid $1 million for the rights up front.

"I'm the caboose on the Will Smith train," an ecstatic Liefeld said. "It's the greatest train ride I've ever been on."

Set in New York in 2001, the sci-fi action film focuses on Mike Collins, a young man who finds himself with superhuman powers after a dying man transfers a permanent mark to his hand.

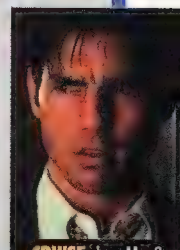
"'The Mark' is my 'Star Wars,'" Liefeld said. "It's a sci-fi movie that I think we all want to see."

The film is scheduled for release in spring or summer of 2000. Plans are also in the works for a cartoon to be released in conjunction with the film, said Liefeld, as well as a number of comic tie-ins. ■ *John B. Lacey with additional reporting with Jenny Peters.*

TRAILERS...

LIGHTS... CAMERA... ACTION?

IRON CRUISE: Tom Cruise as Iron Man? It could happen, but don't hold your breath. Reports of Cruise expressing interest in Iron Man have raced through the entertainment industry recently. According to sources, CW Productions, the company owned by Cruise and Paula Wagner, wants to develop an "Iron Man" movie, with Cruise producing and possibly starring. Reports indicate the film would play off the aspect of Tony Stark having a bullet lodged near his heart. While a script for "Iron Man" has been written, the movie's been considered "on hold" at Fox because of Marvel's financial situation.


CRUISE: Iron Man?

X-UPDATE: Production of the live-action "X-Men" movie should start by the end of the year under director Bryan Singer ("The Usual Suspects"). The script continues to be polished, and shooting locations are being scouted.

DAMON AS DAREDEVIL: A Marvel source confirmed there have been talks with Disney about a "Daredevil" movie after the character's film rights reverted from 20th Century Fox back to Marvel. Matt Damon, fresh off the Oscar-winning "Good Will Hunting," reportedly has expressed interest in playing the Man Without Fear.

DAMON: Daredevil?

EMMY WINNERS: "The New Batman/Superman Adventures" won a Daytime Emmy Award in the Special/Class Animated Program division. The series won for the three-part "World's Finest" episode, which will be released on home video this August for $14.95.

MOORE MOVIES: Alan Moore's upcoming WildStorm miniseries, *The League of Extraordinary Gentleman,* may be coming to a big screen near you. According to *Variety,* Twentieth Century Fox has picked up the film rights to the superhero drama starring legendary characters (Captain Nemo, Dr. Jekyll, Allan Quartermain and the Invisible Man) in Victorian England.

ALIEN LEGION: The rights to Marvel/Epic's *Alien Legion* comic have been picked up by MGM, who hopes to develop the sci-fi galactic police force series as a Showtime series next year. Bob Gale ("Back to the Future") may head up the project, with former *Alien Legion* writer Chuck Dixon lined up to write a number of episodes.

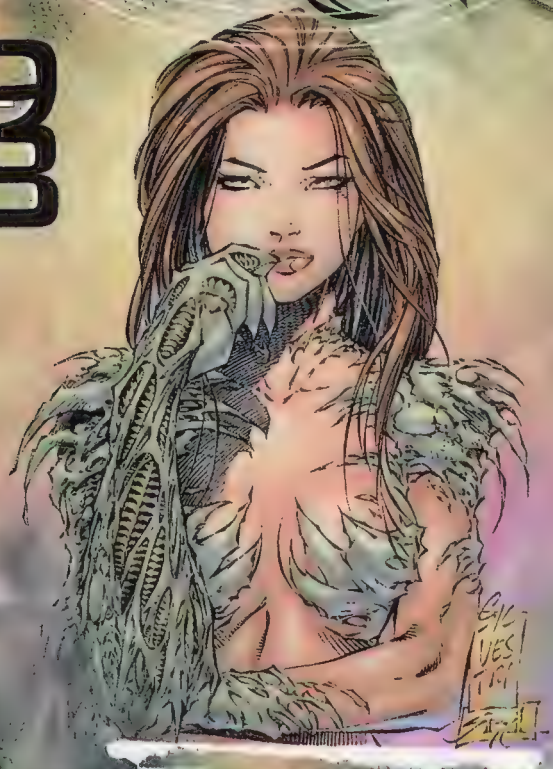
SHORT TAKES: Howard Chaykin's "Power and Glory" has been optioned by Hollywood Pictures for a possible movie....NBC has paid $25 million for the rights to broadcast "Godzilla" beginning in February 2001....Marvel's "Mort the Dead Teenager" remains alive in development at DreamWorks...."Timecop," the canceled television series based on the Dark Horse Comics series, has returned this summer on ABC....Greg Johnson ("Iron Man," "The Incredible Hulk") and Larry Brody ("Silver Surfer," "Spawn") are working on Fox's "Diabolik" animated series, based on an Italian comic book about a thief who steals from other thieves. Forty episodes are planned....The "Zen, Intergalactic Ninja" movie is being targeted for a 1999 release, with a "Zen" animated series planned to follow....Fox's live-action "Nick Fury" film placed 79 out of 114 shows in the Nielsen ratings for the week of May 25-31, indicating that a sequel seems highly unlikely. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

Songs of the Witchblade

A SOUNDTRACK TO THE COMIC BOOK

AUGUST 1998

3 ALBUM COVERS



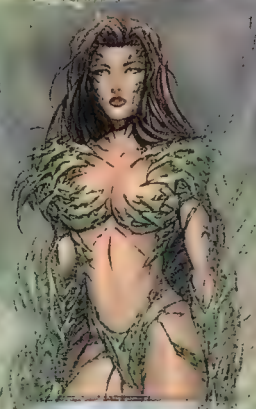
Composed, curated, cobbled, and controlled by Kat Bjelland (of Babes in Toyland)

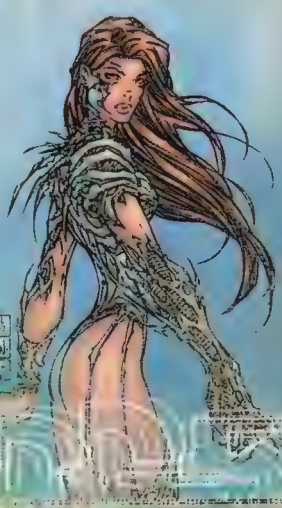
Music by: Babes in Toyland, Peter Steele (Type-O Negative), Buzz Osborne (The Melvins), Sub Circus, The Creatures, Chris Vrenna, Alexis, Johnny, and Scott (Girls Against Boys), Steve Duda, Rave Ogilvie, Mimi Goese, Hope Nicholls, Jim Thirwell (Foetus), Miho Hatori(Cibo Matto), Arto Lindsay (DNA), Kim Fox, Lydia Lunch, special guests, & Eric Bogosian as D. Gavin Taylor.

Conceived by Michael Turner, David Wohl, Christina Z., and Kat Bjelland

Produced and Mixed by Dave "Rave" Ogilvie (Thanks for the loan Puppy and Trent)

Executive Producers: Marc Silvestri and Brad Foxhoven (Top Cow Productions) and Tim Carr(Dreamworks Records)





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OFF THE WITCHBLADE

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Fantastic Four®

Picking up from the continuity of *Fantastic Four* (vol. 3) #1, the Mole Man declares war on the Fantastic Four and all of humankind. The malicious man from down below targets New York as his first strike and it's up to Reed Richards (Mr. Fantastic), Sue Richards (the Invisible Woman), Ben Grimm (The Thing) and Johnny Storm (the Human Torch) to save the day. Brought to you by Marvel and Wizard Entertainment, the *Fantastic Four* #1/2 features monsters galore, all-out action and the FF in all their glory...just the way you like 'em! So get that check or money order for $3 ready and send it in with your completed order form before it's too late! The Mole Man is coming!

Within the FANTASTIC FOUR #1/2, you'll find these hidden treasures:

- A brand-new story written by Ralph Macchio and drawn by Ron Lim!
- An exclusive story that takes place in continuity!
- The Fantastic Four defending New York and all of mankind from the evil Mole Man!
- Sketchbook art and more sketchbook art!
- And the most fantastic bit of all—this is a Fantastic Four story you won't find anywhere else! This exclusive comic is available through this one-time *Wizard* offer only!

Don't delay!
The fate of the world depends on you!

IT'S LAWYERIN' TIME!

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00, other foreign orders remit $6.00. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment Group. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight-to-12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by October 23, 1998.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES OCTOBER 23, 1998

BASIC TRAINING

DALE KEOWN SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW PROPORTIONS

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

Hey there! In the books I've drawn (*Incredible Hulk*, *Pitt*), proportions have always played a BIG part. When first approached to do this piece I was reluctant, though. Y'see, I wasn't sure I'd have enough time and space to do it justice, or even be able to put into words the things I've come to understand about drawing proportions. "Proportion is the relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to magnitude, quantity or degree." (Yeah, I looked it up!) Anyway, correct proportioning is probably the single most important part of the drawing process. (No pressure or anything!) Instead of giving you a straightforward "how to" approach, I've decided to basically give you a walk-through of my observations. So let's start sizing things up.

A Shoulder to Cry On (and on and on...)

Here you can see the difference between these two *Incredible Hulk* regulars: Doc Samson, a man of heroic proportions, and Rick Jones, an average-sized guy who keeps in good shape. Rick stands about 5 feet 8 inches tall and, using his head as measurement, is about three and a half heads wide from shoulder to shoulder. The guy's no slouch and has certainly proven himself in battle. Still, he looks pedestrian standing next to the 6-foot-6-inch Samson, who's at least five heads wide. Sorry, Rick.

Exaggerating the musculature system, especially the limbs and torso, can add dramatic presence to any superhero.

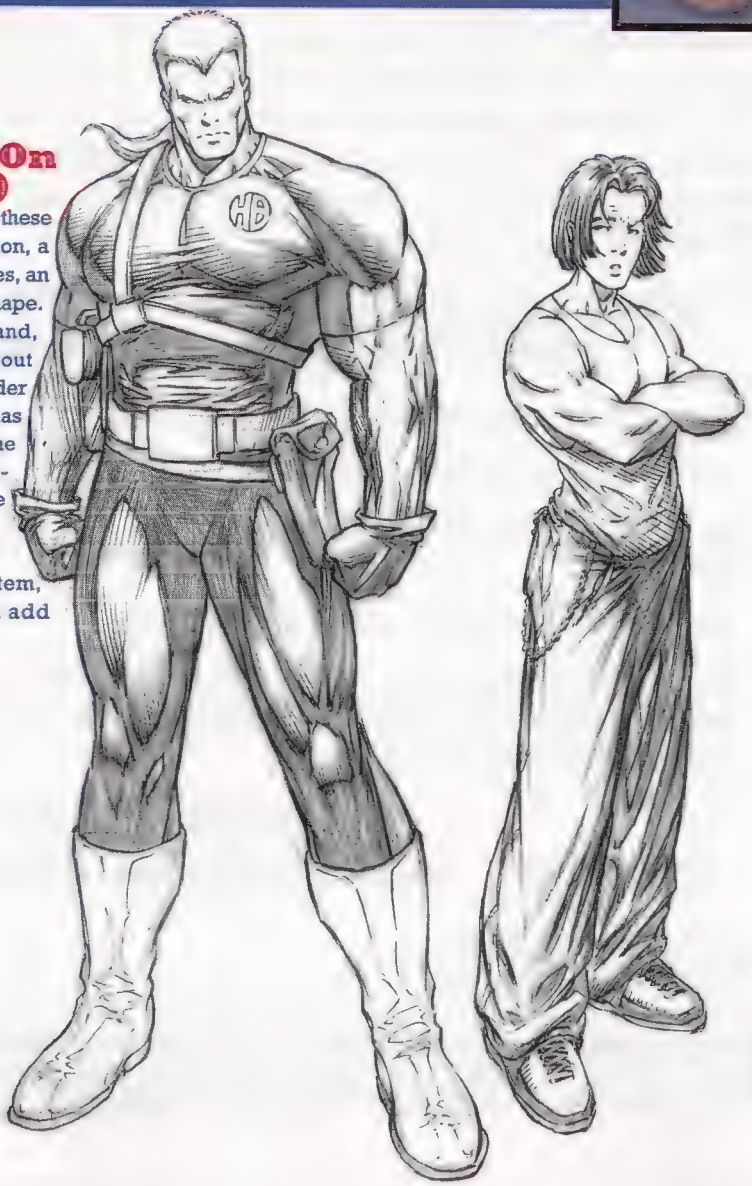
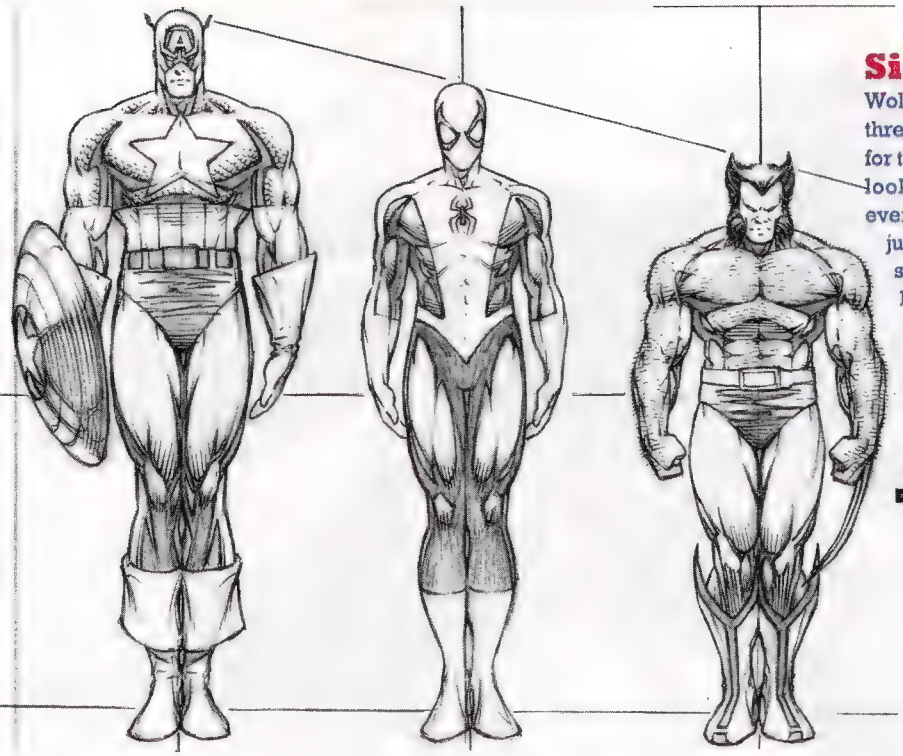


PHOTO: PAUL SCIVRALDI



Size Matters

Wolverine is the shortest hero of these three (and of most comic characters, for that matter), but, in my opinion, he looks the toughest. That's because even though he's only 5 feet tall, he's just as wide as Captain America, who stands roughly 6'4" tall. Spider-Man—standing at about 5'10"—has closer to "normal" proportions of an average man in really good shape. So while you should definitely keep your characters' heights in mind, also pay close attention to their widths..

Head Hunting

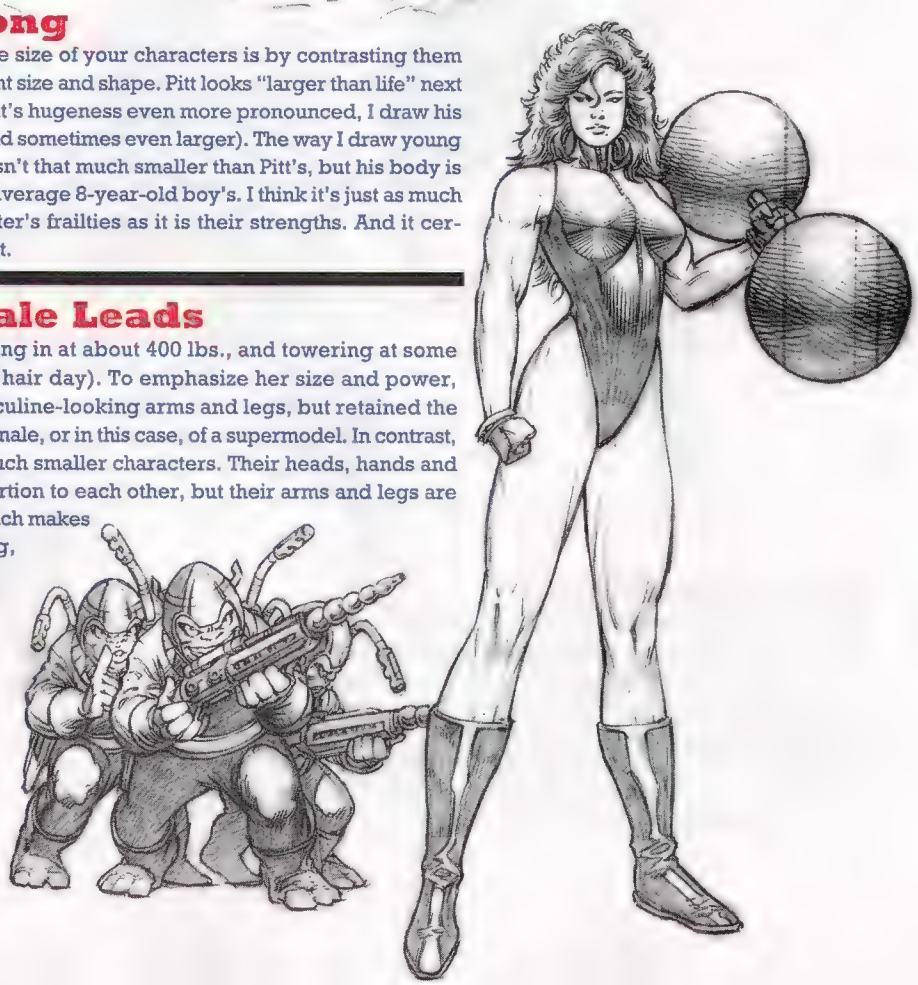
Here, I've depicted Wolverine in three different ways to demonstrate how head size affects how large or small your whole character looks. Try covering up two of the figures at a time and look at each one individually. In picture A., you see him with his properly proportioned head. He appears short yet very powerful—a real scrapper. In B., I've drawn his head much too small—he looks like he's 7 feet tall! In C., his head is obviously way too big, unless, of course, you're penciling *The Zany Adventures of Li'l Wolvie.*

Weak is Strong

A good way to establish the size of your characters is by contrasting them with others of totally different size and shape. Pitt looks "larger than life" next to little Timmy! To make Pitt's hugeness even more pronounced, I draw his arms as large as his legs (and sometimes even larger). The way I draw young Timmy Bracken, his head isn't that much smaller than Pitt's, but his body is probably smaller than the average 8-year-old boy's. I think it's just as much fun exaggerating a character's frailties as it is their strengths. And it certainly helps build a contrast.

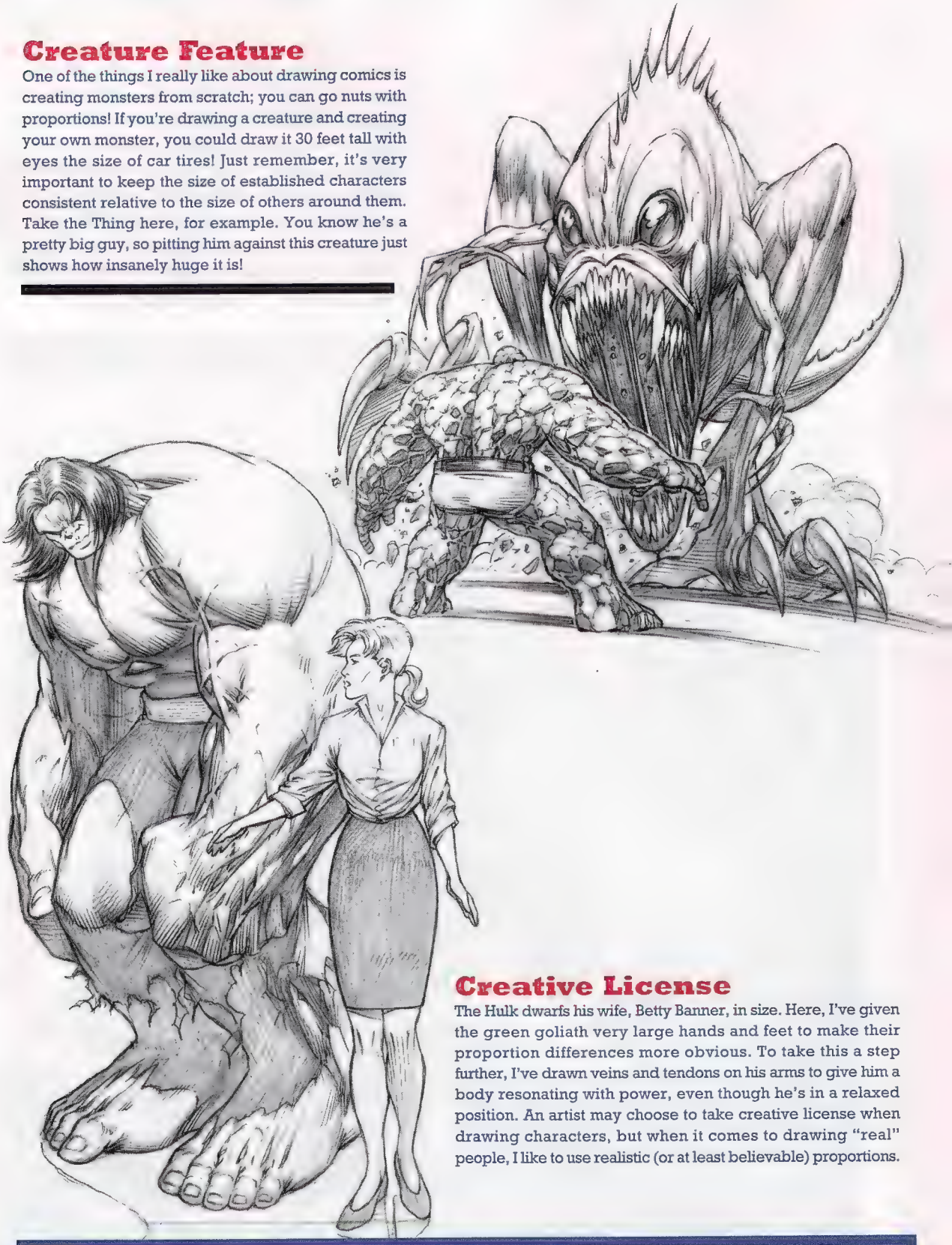
Strong Female Leads

She-Hulk is heavy, weighing in at about 400 lbs., and towering at some 7 feet tall (7'4" on a good hair day). To emphasize her size and power, I've given her almost masculine-looking arms and legs, but retained the characteristic curves of a female, or in this case, of a supermodel. In contrast, the Toadmen are much, much smaller characters. Their heads, hands and feet are balanced in proportion to each other, but their arms and legs are too short in comparison, which makes them pretty funny looking, especially next to Shulkie.



Creature Feature

One of the things I really like about drawing comics is creating monsters from scratch; you can go nuts with proportions! If you're drawing a creature and creating your own monster, you could draw it 30 feet tall with eyes the size of car tires! Just remember, it's very important to keep the size of established characters consistent relative to the size of others around them. Take the Thing here, for example. You know he's a pretty big guy, so pitting him against this creature just shows how insanely huge it is!



Creative License

The Hulk dwarfs his wife, Betty Banner, in size. Here, I've given the green goliath very large hands and feet to make their proportion differences more obvious. To take this a step further, I've drawn veins and tendons on his arms to give him a body resonating with power, even though he's in a relaxed position. An artist may choose to take creative license when drawing characters, but when it comes to drawing "real" people, I like to use realistic (or at least believable) proportions.

In closing, I recommend hunting down some reference books on drawing realistic proportions—check your local library, comic shop or book store. Once you've studied, practiced and learned the basics, your only limits will be your own talent and imagination. Have fun!

Canadian Dale Keown's big honkin' characters (and the wee li'l guys, too), can be seen in the proportionally cool pages of his creator-owned Pitt, *published by Full Bleed Studios .*

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

How does Green Lantern Kyle Rayner defeat Dr. Light? The *Wizard* #79 Green Lantern contest asked that very question. To serve up an appropriate answer, we have selected the creative grand-prize winner who'll receive a funky cool page of Darryl Banks original artwork from *GL* #79, a Green Lantern statue sculpted by the lovely and talented William Paquet, a copy of *Green Lantern/Sentinel* #1 signed by Ron Marz and Paul Pelletier, and a *Green Lantern: A New Dawn* trade paperback signed by Marz and Banks. Runners-up won't stomp off dejected and empty handed as they get both the signed comic and the trade paperback! Oh yeah, and winners also get bragging rights...after all, their artwork is shown here!

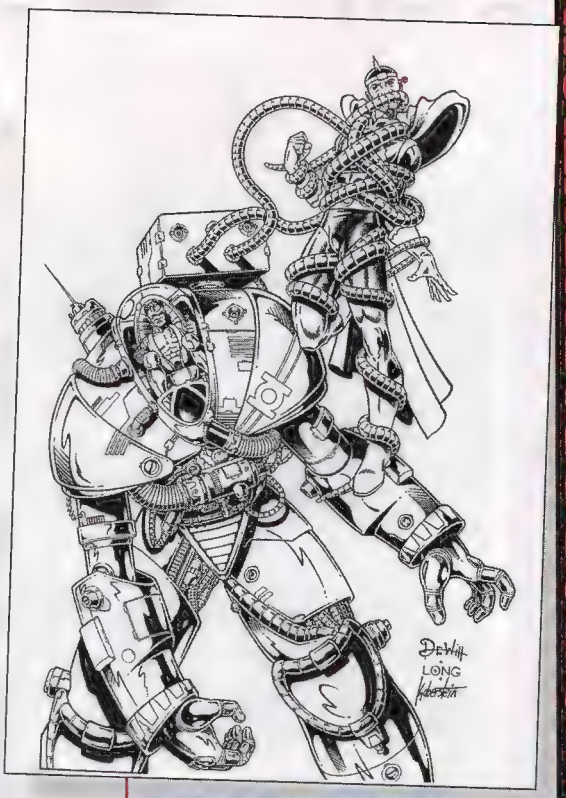
GRAND PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

LIGHTS OFF
CARLOS GRULLON, Glendale, N.Y.

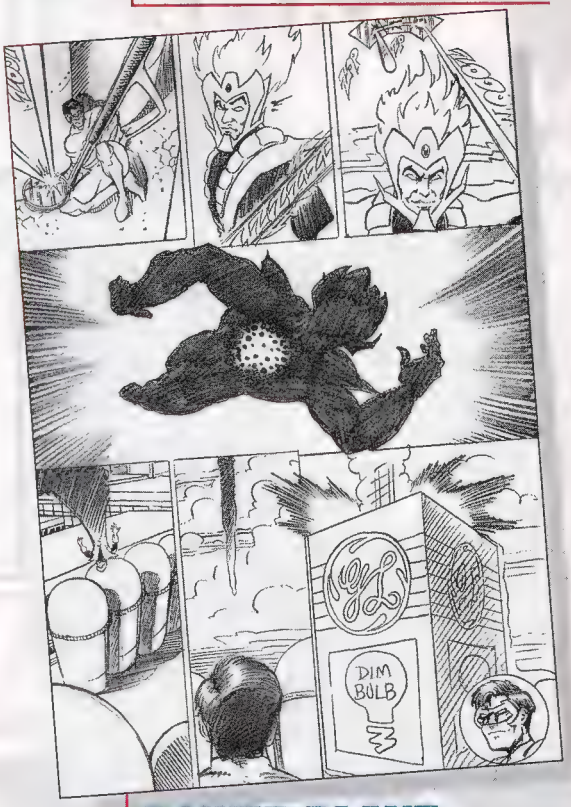
THE BOOTY

DARK LANTERN
MARTIN SALWEN, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.



ROBO-TECHNO LANTERN
JEFF DEWITT, Madison, Wis.

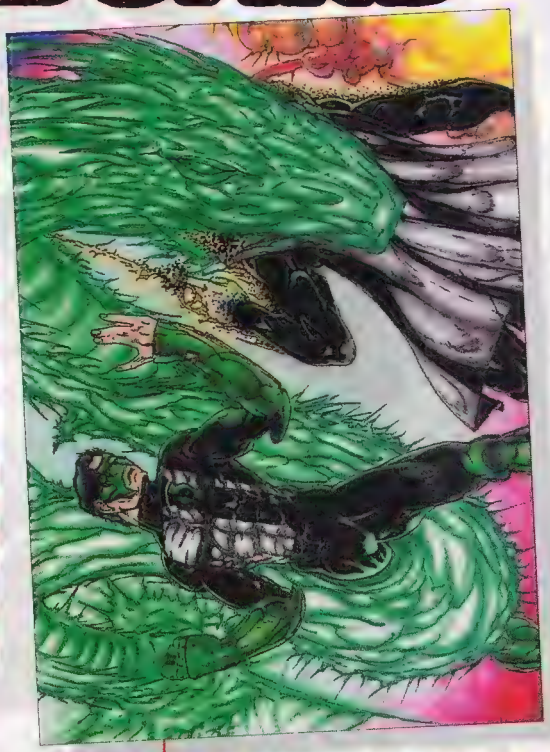
THE BODY JAIL
JAIRO PAEZ, Miami, Fla.



POWER PLANT TECHNIQUE
RICK LUNDEEN, Western Springs, Ill

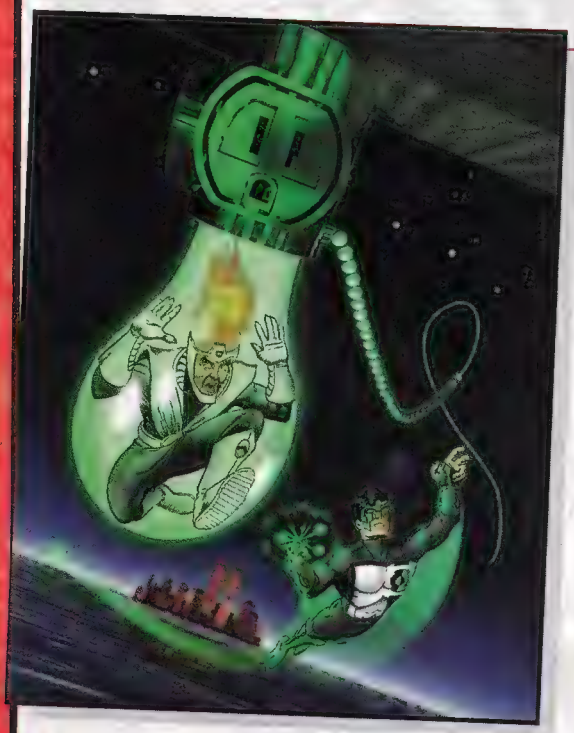
Drawing BOARD

HONORABLE MENTIONS



EXTINGUISHING BITE
LARRY KINCAID, Brighton, Colo.

CITY LIGHTS
JOSH CAMBRON, Lubbock, Texas



LIGHTS OUT
Van Secrist, Los Angeles, Calif.

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include two color photos of yourself** (no Polaroids, please). All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

Introducing HOT NEW Witchblade penciler
RANDY GREEN!
THE EVILS OF PROSPERITY.
WITCHBLADE
#26!
still written by
DAVID WOHL
and
CHRISTINA Z.
still inked by
D-TRON.
still colored by
JONATHAN D. SMITH
RANDY GREEN D-TRON JDSMITH 1998
TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.
Image
www.topcow.com
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TOTALLY JLA

These ain't yer daddy's Total Justice figures. Hasbro plans to start up a line of toys devoted to the JLA, DC's most popular superteam, comprised of figures redesigned from the recent Batman: Total Justice line and sold only at Kay-Bee stores. The first wave of figures to hit stores in the fall will include **Batman**, **Superman Red**, **Superman Blue**, **Green Lantern**, **Green Arrow**, **Huntress** and the **Flash**. By the spring of 1999, fans can look for **Steel**, **Aquaman**, a newly sculpted **Martian Manhunter**, a regular Superman and an alternate Batman. In addition, Diamond Comics Distributors will offer two boxed sets of five figures each in December that will repackage the existing Kay-Bee line and add "hard light" versions of **Batman, Flash, Green Lantern** and **Electric Superman** (inspired by the recent "Rock of Ages" storyline).

And it looks like the fun ain't gonna end there. If the first two JLA assortments are snatched up by collectors, Hasbro plans more JLA helpings. Already on the short list of contenders are Plastic Man, Robin and Superboy. If fans keep buying 'em, Hasbro'll keep making 'em.

And, in other DC toy news, Diamond Comics Distributors will offer the much-sought-after **Supergirl** figure, from the Superman Animated Series line, to the hobby and comic book market. This elusive figure was previously sold just about everywhere else in the world *except* the United States, but now getting a hold of this gal's gonna be a whole lot easier this fall thanks to Diamond.

BLOCKS BY PAUL SOURALIS. JLA PHOTOS COURTESY OF HASBRO INC.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Martian Manhunter, Fone Bone and...a time-traveling caveman?!??

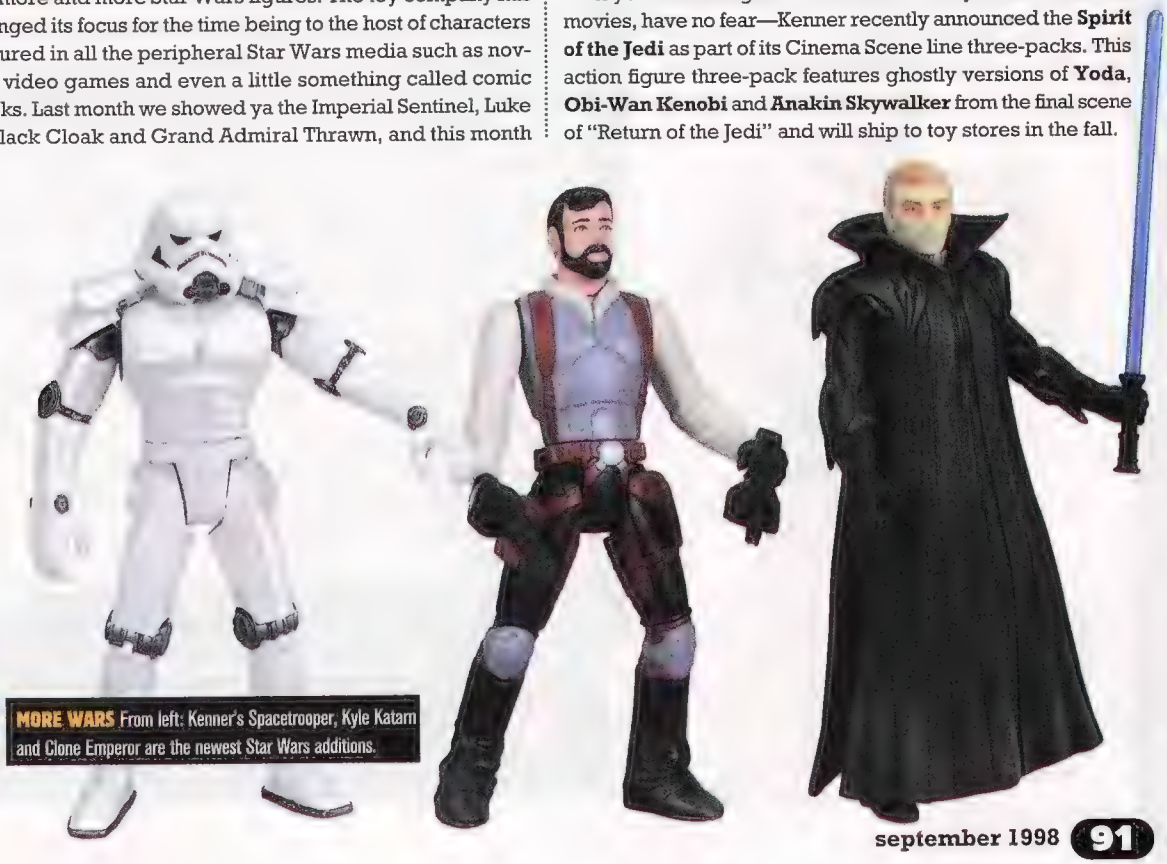
SUPER-BABE Diamond Comics Distributors flings the Supergirl figure into stores this fall.

SUPER-FRIENDS Opposite page, from Left: Martian Manhunter and Superman Red. This page: Hard Light Flash. All will hit Kay-Bee exclusively over the course of the next year.

THE EVER-EXPANDING STAR WARS UNIVERSE

While Star Wars fans count down the minutes to the first Star Wars prequel film, Kenner's still pumping out more and more Star Wars figures. The toy company has changed its focus for the time being to the host of characters featured in all the peripheral Star Wars media such as novels, video games and even a little something called comic books. Last month we showed ya the Imperial Sentinel, Luke in Black Cloak and Grand Admiral Thrawn, and this month we've got **Kyle Katarn** (from the *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight* video games), the **Clone Emperor** (the baddie from Dark Horse's *Dark Empire* comic mini-series) and the **Spacetrooper** (a little-seen variation on the iconic Stormtrooper outfitted for deep-space duty). Look for these spacey figures this summer at toy stores across the country.

If you're looking for more Star Wars toys from the actual movies, have no fear—Kenner recently announced the **Spirit of the Jedi** as part of its Cinema Scene line three-packs. This action figure three-pack features ghostly versions of **Yoda**, **Obi-Wan Kenobi** and **Anakin Skywalker** from the final scene of "Return of the Jedi" and will ship to toy stores in the fall.

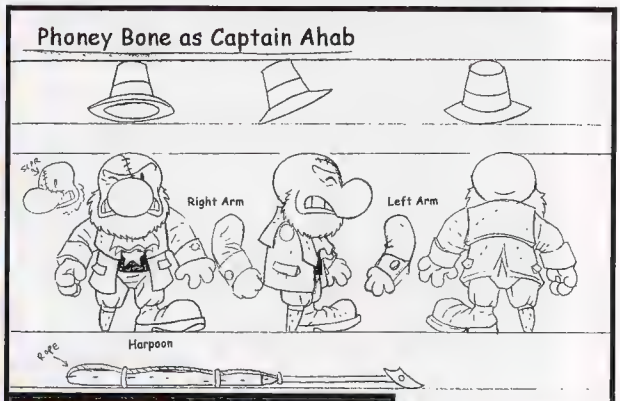


MORE WARS From left: Kenner's Spacetrooper, Kyle Katarn and Clone Emperor are the newest Star Wars additions.

STAR WARS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNER. SUPERGIRL PHOTO COURTESY OF DIAMOND COMICS DISTRIBUTORS

THROW 'EM A BONE

They just might be this year's cutest toys. *Bone*, Jeff Smith's small-press success story, makes the jump to the action figure world courtesy of ReSaurus. The Bone line looks to be one of the most faithful comics-to-toys translations in a long time. Smith oversaw the sculpting of each figure, making sure each has accessories that make sense: **Fone Bone** (bottom left) comes with a paper sack hat, fishing rod, Bartleby the baby rat creature and a copy of *Moby Dick*, and **Smiley Bone** (bottom middle) comes with his signature hat and vest, guitar and all three of the possum kids. The first wave of Bone toys will include Fone Bone, Smiley Bone, **Thorn** and a **Stupid, Stupid Rat Creature.** In addition, Diamond Comics Distributors will offer a special **Phoney Bone as Ahab** figure, which is the only way to get the third Bone cousin until the second assortment of toys in spring, 1999. ReSaurus' Bone line hits stores in the fall, just in time for the Christmas buying season.



NO BONES ABOUT IT These Bone figures are sure cute.

ALLEY OOP: THE FULL SCOOP

Alley who? While he may not be a household name for comic book fans, the time-traveling caveman **Alley Oop** is the star of one of the longest-running daily comic strips and will soon be familiar to all toy fans. That's 'cause he's the new kid on the action figure block from Antarctic Press. The 7-inch Alley Oop figure joins the Antarctic stable in November and bears the seal of approval from the strip's current artist, Jack Bender.

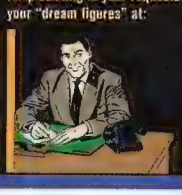
MONKEY FUN Antarctic's Alley Oop pounds his way into comic stores in November.

WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

1) **SOUTH PARK** The South Park juggernaut keeps rolling on and on, but one thing's missing: action figures! Toys of Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny with sound chips would rock da house.
2) **BATTLE CHASERS** Kids today love two things: Battle Chasers and action figures. It sounds like a match made in heaven. Sure, Chasers toys would just look like repainted Final Fantasy toys, but who cares!
3) **THUNDERBOLTS** Toy Biz's uncovered nearly every corner of the Marvel Universe, but the Thunderbolts seem to be getting ignored. Pack each 'Bolt with his evil alter-ego and you'll be set.
4) **BASTION** One thing's for sure, there just ain't enough action figures of X-Men villains. That's why we need Bastion. Heck, why not throw in Nimrod and Master Mold for an extra-nifty three-pack?
5) **DANGER GIRL** Action figures of scantily-clad spy chicks? Sign us up, man!
6) **GURI** Prince Xizor's beautiful-but-deadly right-hand gal is the one Star Wars Expanded Universe fans wanna see the most. Good looks, a leggy outfit and a bad attitude is all she needs to climb the ladder to action-figure glory.
7) **BLACK PANTHER** T'Challa's getting a makeover courtesy of artist Mark Texeira, so now's the time for Toy Biz to make a new Black Panther figure. Deck 'im out with ball-jointed legs and arms for all sorts of ass-whuppin' action!
8) **COMMISSIONER GORDON** He's been part of the Batman mythos since the beginning, so why ain't there a Commissioner Gordon toy? Better yet, make him part of the animated Batman line and fans'll go nuts!
9) **AMALGAM** We might sound like a broken record, but Amalgam toys *have* to get made! A toy line of Super Soldier, Dr. Strangefate and Dark Claw would quite simply kick ass.
10) **WANDA AND CYAN TWO-PACK** The Spawny-verse ain't just creepy-looking monsters! When's McFarlane Toys gonna wise up and make some of *Spawn*'s supporting cast like Al Simmons' former wife?

Hey! Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:



TOY WISH LIST
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920
Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

SOUTH PARK PHOTO COURTESY OF COMEDY CENTRAL; ALLEY OOP PHOTO BY PAUL SCIRSALDI; FONE BONE AND SMILEY BONE PHOTOS COURTESY OF RESAURUS.

MARTHA WASHINGTON PHOTO COURTESY OF DARK HORSE. CAPTAIN CALHOUN PHOTO COURTESY OF STAR TREK FAN CLUB.

GONIG TO WAR Dark Horse Comics marches Martha Washington into toy form in November.

MARTHA WASHINGTON

Hot on the tails of the Ghost action figure, Dark Horse Comics is set to go to war with the **Martha Washington** action figure, based on the Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons creation. The star of *Give Me Liberty* and *Martha Washington Goes to War* will ship to comic stores in November with two variants—a bald-headed Martha and a dreadlocked Martha. The figure has nine points of articulation and carries a price tag of $13.95.

TREKKIE TREAT

Star Wars ain't the only sci-fi toy line to get swept up in exclusive madness. This September, the Star Trek Fan Club, along with Playmates Toys, will offer the first-ever action figure of **Captain Mackenzie Calhoun**, star of the "Star Trek: New Frontier" series of novels (written by none other than *Young Justice*'s Peter David). This exclusive figure's important for two reasons: it's the first Trek toy to be made from a character not shown on television or the big screen, and it's the first to be offered through the Star Trek fan club. If you want to join the club and get a six-issue subscription to the *Star Trek Communicator* newsletter, write to *The Star Trek Communicator*, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042.

NEW FRONTIER Captain Calhoun is the first action figure available through the Star Trek fan club.

ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. does not pee in the shower.*

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Matter-Eating Lad's Edible Eatware, The Toad's Wart Remover or *The Punisher's Guide to the Second Amendment*, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS Actually, they're Marvel *women*. And they make for a great print.

THOSE MARVEL-OUS GIRLS

A limited-edition Iris print will soon be available from Marvel featuring brand-new, all-original artwork by Bruce Timm. This Marvel Girls print ($150) features 14 female icons of the Marvel universe. Printed on Iris watercolor paper, it has an image area of 10" X 15". It's limited to just 300 signed and numbered units and will be available in stores this month.

RED EYE! Cyclops dons his old X-Men costume for this brand-new bust.

THE X-MEN GET BUSTED

Sculptor Randy Bowen and Bowen Designs present a mini-bust of everyone's favorite visor-wearing X-Man, Cyclops. Each mini-bust measures about 6 inches tall and comes fully painted and ready for display. The Cyclops mini-bust ($30) will be available this month.

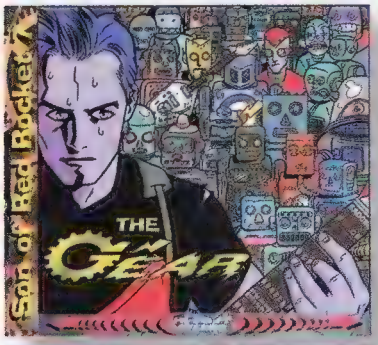
THE RING OF STEEL

The heroic emblem of the Man of Steel soon will be available in a beautiful silver ring. Each solid-cast sterling silver ring ($79.95) features Superman's S-shield. It's limited to just 5,000 copies and comes in sizes six through 13 (whole sizes only). This ring will hit super-stores in September.

KRYPTON'S RING It takes a super finger to wear this Superman ring.

RED ROCKETING CD

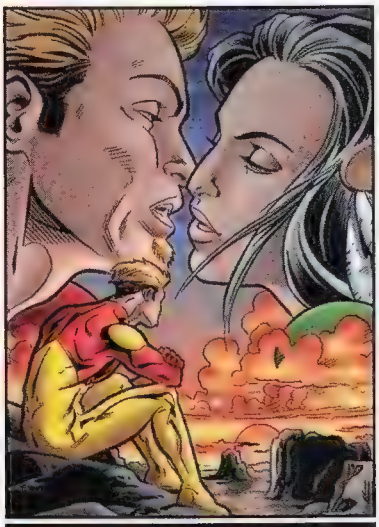
The Gear isn't just the fictional musical group featured in Mike Allred's new comic series *Red Rocket 7*, it's also Allred's real-life band! This September, look for The Gear's new disc, *Son of Red Rocket 7* ($15.95). The CD, from Dark Horse Comics, features 11 songs as well as a 24-page booklet with all-new art by Allred. Look for this puppy in music (and comic) stores in September.



GEAR HEAD Artist Mike Allred makes merry music on the *Son of Red Rocket 7* CD.

GREETINGS FROM GEN[13]

Get carded with the Gen[13] Greeting Card Assortment ($12.60) from WildStorm and Gibson Greetings Inc. Each pack of six cards features the characters from *Gen[13]* with a variety of messages—from birthday wishes to "just thinking of you." Each card has colorful art by former *Gen[13]* artist J. Scott Campbell, and the set will be available in September.



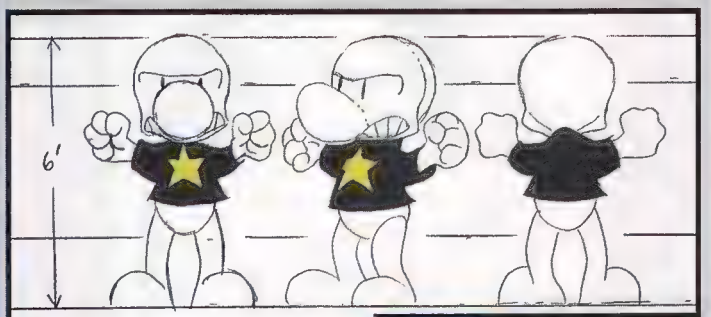
GENERATION GREETINGS Angst-filled Gen[13] teens have moody moments turned into greeting cards.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

INFLATABLE BONE

Showing that it's the size of the Bone that counts, Cartoon Books presents the 6-foot tall inflatable Phoney Bone toy ($39.95)! Each inflatable comes in nine-gauge vinyl and wears a black T-shirt with star on a white Phoney body. At far larger than life size, he'll scare the money right out of your pockets. Look for it this month.



BLOWN BONE The 6-foot inflatable Phoney Bone will come with a neat-o T-shirt.

MONKEYMAN MADNESS

They say monkeys shouldn't play with matches. That's why they should use the new Monkeyman and O'Brien Zippo lighter ($29.95) from Dark Horse Comics. Arthur Adams' larger-than-life characters are displayed smoking in a five-color graphic on this genuine Zippo. Also keep an eye out for the Monkeyman and O'Brien shot glass ($5.95). A different image of the duo is printed on a clear shot glass. Look for them both in September.

GONE APE! Comic fact #438: Monkeyman looks more like a gorilla than a monkey.

X-CHANGE

Marvel Comics and the Highland Mint are X-cited (Ouch!) about the X-Men 35th Anniversary Coin Set ($60) which will be released this month. The set contains five coins of pure bronze sporting designs for Cyclops, Wolverine, Storm, Gambit and Rogue. Limited to just 2,500 editions, each set comes in a velvet jewelry box and is accompanied by a numbered certificate of authenticity.

PERSECUTED PESOS Hey, if everybody hates and fears the X-Men, why are they on these coins?

SPACING OUT Space adventurer Akiko and her friends demand you put it in writing–on the Akiko writing pad.

WRITE ON, AKIKO!

Akiko creator Mark Crilley and Sirius Entertainment have created four brand-new painted designs for the Akiko Writing Pad ($5). The 8 1/2" X 5 1/2" pad contains 48 tear-off sheets for you to jot down those important notes. The new designs feature Akiko, Gax, Poog, Spuckler and Mr. Beeba! Look for the Akiko Writing Pad in September.

SPAWN, POSTED AND REDEEMED

This September, look for the Spawn: Wings of Redemption ($4.95) poster that features our garbage-picking anti-hero finally seeing the light. Measuring 22" X 34", this colorful portrait is penciled by *Spawn* artist Greg Capullo and inked by creator Todd McFarlane.

WINGING IT Spawny-boy looks ready to fly in this new poster.

TRUE BELIEVER T-SHIRTS

This fall, Marvel Comics and Graphitti Designs present a wide variety of T-shirts to fill those Marvel cravings in us all. Look for shirts featuring the classic Steve Ditko Spider-Man on a white background, a rendition of Silver Surfer from Jack Kirby on a black T-shirt, a new Thor white T-shirt by John Romita Jr. and Jim Townsend, and a frightening rendition of Dr. Doom by John Byrne on a forest-green background. In addition, you'll find a Venom symbol double-sided T-shirt, and a Punisher shirt with his trademark skull symbol screen-printed in white on a black background. Each T-shirt costs $16.95 for L to XL and $19.95 for XXL (except the Venom Symbol which is $19.95 for L to XL and $21.95 for XXL 'cause it's printed on both sides).

DRESSING UP True believers can face front in these T-shirts.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out fun comic-related merchandise like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.? We'd like to preview 'em! Please send all info and sample products to:

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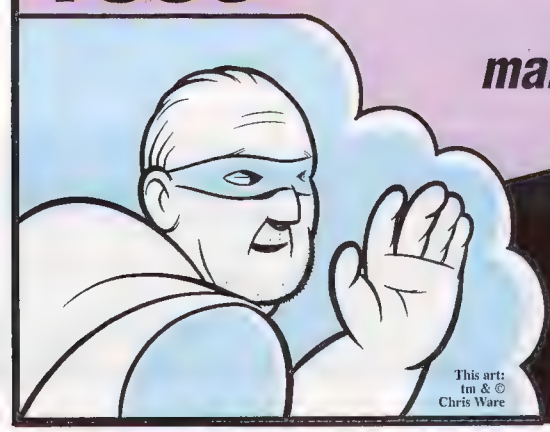
and many, many more!



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video STUFF

By Matt Danish and Greg Orlando

They didn't want to let us in to May's big E3 video game show in Atlanta, but we crashed the joint to bring you news, previews and screen shots for the hottest soon-to-be-released video games. Next month, we'll bring you more E3 insanity—or break our fingers trying.

E3 1998 REPORT

NEW SEGA CONSOLE NO 'DREAM'

Bye-bye "Black Belt," kiss "Katana" goodbye and say *do svidaniya* to the "Dural." Sega's new video game console has a new name, and it's dreamy.

Amid a circus-like orgy, which included a comedy monologue by actor Kevin Nealon, Sega of America president Bernard Stolar unveiled Dreamcast at E3, set to debut this November in Japan, and in the fall of 1999 in North America. The CD-based system, Stolar promised, will launch with 10-12 games and is intended to vault Sega back into contention as *the* video game giant.

The off-white-colored Dreamcast console looks like its predecessor, the Sega Saturn, but packs a 128-bit punch, three million polygons per second, and an impressive 16-megabyte system memory. It will be the first home-gaming system, Stolar said, to allow multi-player gaming through the Internet. Using a modem, Dreamcast owners will have access to e-mail, chat rooms and a slew of competitive and cooperative games.

Dreamcast's analog joystick (which resembles a mutated Nintendo 64 controller) features a removable memory card with a liquid-crystal display that comes with a directional pad and doubles as a mini-game system unto itself. With this setup, called VMS or Virtual Memory System, gamers can organize special plays in sports games or plan secret attacks in role-playing games, save characters and game data and trade information with other VMS units.

Video game manufacturers Acclaim, Interplay, Microprose, Midway and GT Interactive, Stolar said, are currently working on games for the new system.

PLEASANT DREAMS The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of Dreamcast danced in their heads.

SLICED CUBE Wolverine demonstates his julienne technique on hapless X-Man Iceman.

MUTATIN' THE PLAYSTATION

Everybody's favorite outcasts, the X-Men, are coming to the PlayStation in the spring of 1999. And coming with them are the corpulent creep Mojo and the wannabe world-conqueror Apocalypse.

The as-yet-untitled game will be produced by Activision, maker of *Heavy Gear* and the classic *Pitfall*, and is being described as a 3-D fighter. According to Activision's senior publicist, Julie Roether, the plot will revolve around Mojo battling Apocalypse, with the fight threatening to destroy the X-Men in the process.

E3 News Bites...

- The **"Tomb Raider"** movie is currently in development by Paramount. No casting has taken place, but the film is scheduled for a fall 1999 release.
- GT Interactive's much-delayed ***Youngblood*** game (based on the Awesome comic book) for the PlayStation has been canceled, reports GT's PR guru Lance Seymour. *Youngblood* will appear on PCs later this year, Seymour said.
- The Pac attack is back. Look for Namco's neat ***Pac Man 3-D*** to be released for the PlayStation by February 1999. The new version features Pac's house, a ghost town, a dot factory, an archeology dig and more. Even the original *Pac Man* maze appears—this time in 3-D! ■

UPAHEAD

As the Earthworm (Jim) turns, 'Metal Gear' is solid, Turok's ready to roll again, and much more!!!

ONE

HUNDRED

YEARS OF

SUPERHERO

HISTORY

PLANETARY™

ARE

ABOUT

TO

EXPLODE

WARREN ELLIS
JOHN CASSADAY

COMING SOON

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SUPERMAN

MANUFACTURER: Titus
PLATFORMS: Sony PlayStation, Nintendo 64
AVAILABILITY: Winter 1998

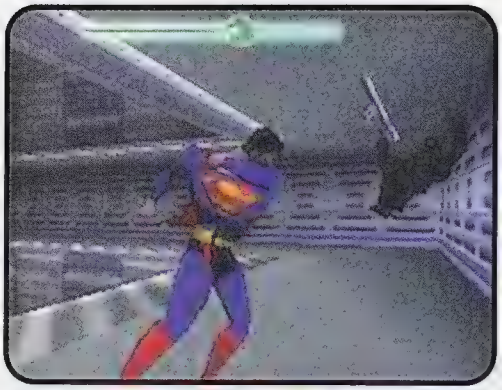
Guess who brought his solid-steel abs to the E3 show? *Superman* was only about 50 percent finished, but revealed a smooth, rapid-flying, 3-D polygonal, animated-series style Superman soaring over a nicely detailed Metropolis!

The game will feature 16 different levels, each with a clear-cut mission objective which must be accomplished before advancing. On level 1, players must rescue a kidnapped Jimmy Olsen and capture and freeze a block of Kryptonite. On other levels, Supes must rescue Lois Lane, battle traditional foes such as Darkseid and Brainiac, and rescue Metropolis from Lex Luthor's eerie Kryptonite fog.

Superman's game play seems invulnerable to suckitude, and fans can play in single or multi-player mode. In the deathmatch mode, up to four players can select characters from the game's menu and form competing teams. What ensues is a rocket ship shooting duel with players flying and dogfighting in their respective ships soaring over the Metropolis skyline. Players score hits with gunfire to win this secondary game, which features a *Duke Nukem*-style vertical split screen.

Game play in the *Superman* solo mode is much more exciting, though. Testing Supes' prowess against the faceless thugs who populate the game's lower levels revealed a Superman equipped with super-speed, super-strength, flight, tremendous hand-to-hand fighting capabilities, X-ray vision, heat vision and icy-cold breath which can freeze a crook. After freezing the baddie with his breath, the Man of Steel can pick up a truck that's 10 times his body size, casually stroll to the baddie and smash it on him! He can burn his foes into submission with his eye ray and can even use his X-ray vision to "see" through walls. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Final Fight* or men in tights, your heart will soar for *Superman*.



KRYPTON KRUSH Superman knocks a baddie into the distant future (above) and takes the old red-eye to Explosionville (below).

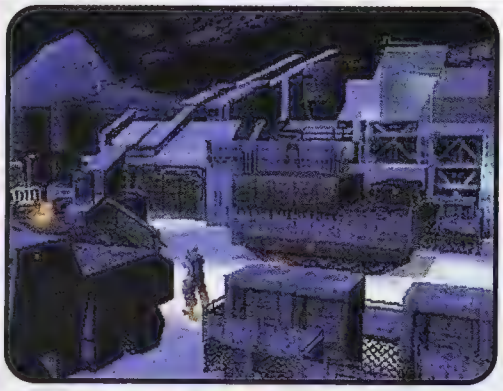
METAL GEAR SOLID

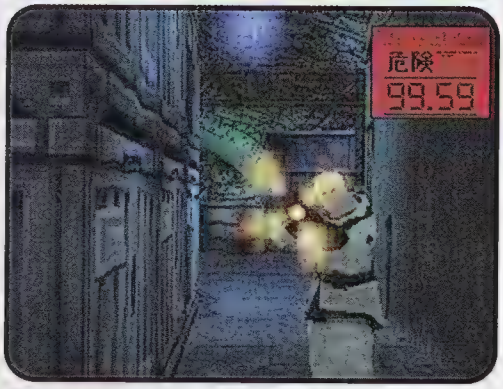
MANUFACTURER: Konami
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
AVAILABILITY: October 1998

Solid Snake—ex-CIA operative, log-cabin hermit and all-around special ops commando—has been called on to penetrate an Alaskan nuclear weapons facility. Members of the Foxhound Special Forces "Space Seals," Snake's former Special Forces' unit, have sold out and are using their commando skills to occupy the nuke site. Because these Foxhound commandos are a highly specialized unit including "Super Soldiers" created through genetic experiments, only Snake, with his cunning Ranger skills and intimate knowledge of his former team, has a snake's chance to penetrate the facility and disarm the nuclear weapons.

MGS, unveiled at E3, was a show-stopper. Players operate Snake, maneuvering him through the weapons site while avoiding, rather than initiating, contact with the facility's countless armed guards. The graphics are life-like enough that puffs of breath from the characters' mouths are visible in the Alaskan cold. Snake can actually watch the 3-D boots of the guards as he hides under a structure and watches the enemy run by him as they seek him out. If he hides too long, some realistic rats might even scurry by. He can dodge artfully between searchlight beams to pick up a grenade and use his martial arts and stealth to isolate and defeat an enemy commando. If he's spotted by a probing light or makes any noise "heard" by the guards (discharging a weapon, for instance), alarms will sound and the search for him will intensify. Though he begins unarmed, Snake can secure and use more than 30 weapons and 20 support items. He can also rely on his highly developed radar map, and helpful, periodic radio transmissions from his allies through a receiver implanted in his neck and ear. ■

TRY IT... If you're a true patriot, like any of the "Metal Gear Series" or *Golgo 13*, drop the gun and get *Metal Gear Solid*.





CALL ME SNAKE If the enemy discovers Snake's presence, alarms will ring and lots of bad-intentioned thugs will shoot their guns.

MORE→

IN THIS ISSUE, QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED!

BUT THE ANSWERS ONLY LEAD TO MORE TROUBLE FOR MAX AND HIS FRIENDS

COMING IN AUGUST

DIVINE RIGHT

THE ADVENTURES OF MAX FARADAY

#6

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TUROK 2

MANUFACTURER: Acclaim
PLATFORMS: Nintendo 64, PC
AVAILABILITY: Fall 1998

Thousands of disgruntled Godzilla fans are lining up—and they're mad as hell. It's going to be a long time before they'll be able to look at anything even *remotely* resembling a dinosaur without wanting to blow it up into five billion pieces.

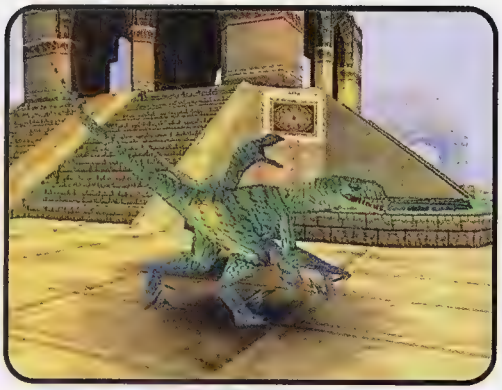
They'll get the chance to vent that hatred. Acclaim served up a special preview of *Turok 2* at E3 and it looks to be a dinosaur hater's fondest wish. This first-person 3-D shooter puts users in Turok's (Joshua Fireseed) moccasins, asking them to vaporize 45 different kinds of enemies on eight sprawling levels—or send three of their friends straight to Hell in a multi-player deathmatch.

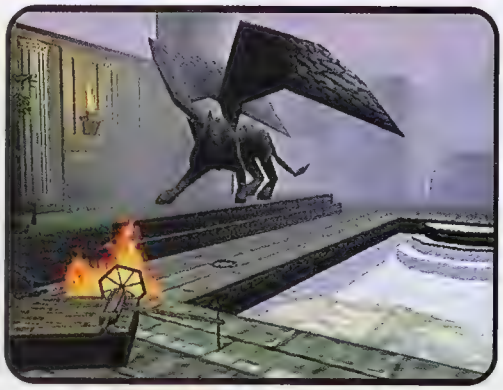
It wasn't love at first sight, but it was close. The first level, a war-torn hell-hole, opens with a series of gorgeous explosions and collapsing, blood-stained walls. It was chock-full of enemies, all of whom appear to be about 1,000 times smarter and faster than their counterparts in the original *Turok* game. Enemies now attack in groups, and will actively attempt to flank Turok to get at his unprotected areas.

TRY IT... If you like your dinosaurs extra-crispy, *Turok* or *Quake*, you'll love *Turok 2*.

Neat touches littered this unfinished preview. Some of the game's enemies, when wounded, will kill themselves by activating an explosive device on their arms. If Turok rifles off a clean head-shot, he can decapitate his foes; the headless beasts will stagger around spurting blood before they finally croak. And the sea gulls that fly over Turok's head? "If you see a creature in this game, you can kill it," David Dienstbier, product manager for *Turok 2*, said.

Our prediction for this game? Pain. But only for the dinosaurs. ■





DINO-SOURS Remember those lovable dinosaurs from "The Flintstones"? Well, these ain't them, no how.

EARTHWORM JIM 3-D

MANUFACTURER: Interplay
PLATFORMS: Nintendo 64, Sony PlayStation and PC
AVAILABILITY: Fall 1998

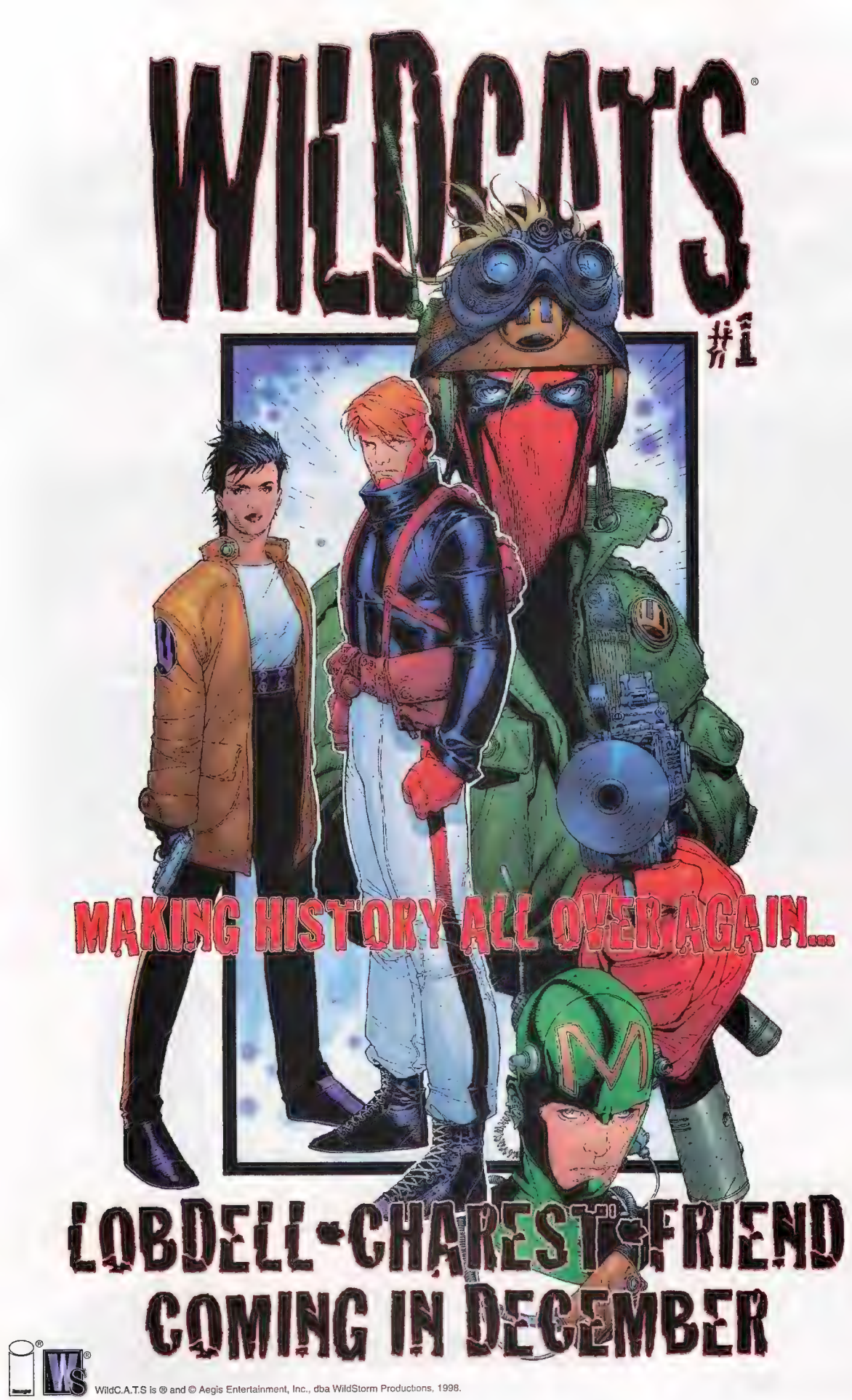
Earthworm Jim was gonna star in a Bond movie, but while filming the trailer, he was knocked senseless by a cow plummeting from outer space.

This wacky 3-D action adventure returns Jim, the superpowered, super-battle-suit-wearing earthworm, to his video game roots. Players plumb the depths of Jim's psyche, playing six huge levels which metaphorically represent his fragmented persona—fears, happiness, fantasies, heroism, etc. Completing all levels might allow players to stitch Jim's psyche back together. The levels radiate from a hub so that they can be completed partially or out of order with players returning to the psychic nucleus after jaunts into Jim's being.

Beyond the usual running, jumping, flying, swimming and puzzle solving that Jim must do to put his brain back together, *Jim 3-D* features various games within the game. *Wizard* was privy to a hilarious sub-game segment where Jim surfs on the back of a pig while trying to collect scattered brain cells. Another sub-game has Jim rocketing through his brain with a pocket rocket—a flying missile, that is. Leave Jim alone for a few moments, and he'll do nutsy stuff like form a hula-hoop with his earthworm body and then spin himself around his battle-suit. And, of course, Jim's old villains Evil the Cat and Professor Monkey-For-A-Head will reappear to menace Jim, and new villains such as the Disco Zombies (who haunt our hero's fears) will surface. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Crash Bandicoot*, *Blasto* or *Gex*, you'll love *Earthworm Jim 3-D*.

BRAIN FREEZE! Travel through Jim's noggin to discover his worst fear–disco zombies. Hey! That's our worst fear, too!


WILDCATS
#1
MAKING HISTORY ALL OVER AGAIN...
LOBDELL • CHAREST • FRIEND
COMING IN DECEMBER
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HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

HEY, QUIT YER WHININ' YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

RA'S AL GHUL & UBU

Ken Gosch of Austin, Texas

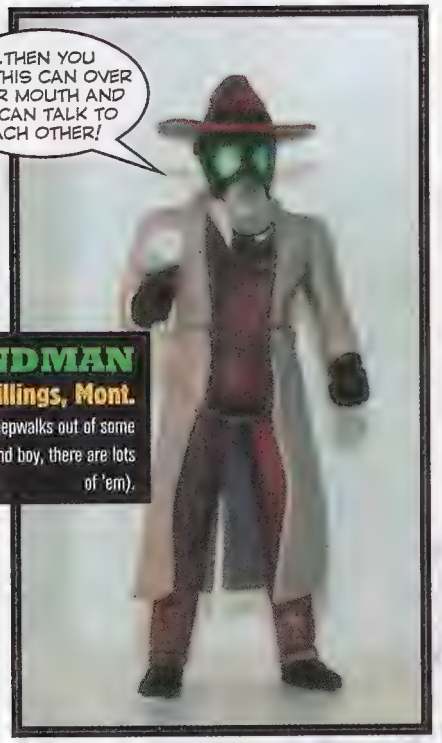
Ken does Ra's Al Ghul better than Kenner. The Texan worked magic by attaching a Kenner Batman Forever Two-Face body and a cloth cape to the existing Kenner Batman: The Animated Series Ra's Al Ghul's repainted head. Meanwhile, Ubu amalgamates from a Batman: The Animated Series Bane body and a Toy Biz Professor X head.

WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

This month's grand-prize winner takes home a 12-inch cold-cast statue of Star Trek's Borg Queen, compliments of the fine folks at Hangar 18! Hey, a hangar's just a big shed for airplanes, right? Maybe—just maybe—they have a spare Borg cube in there. That'd be cool. Anyway, the four other talented creators featured here just get to brag that their figures were showcased in *Wizard*. And no, we don't have any spaceships lying around.

Many thanks to the Hangar 18 drones for the stellar prizes!

JOKER (FROM TANGENT UNIVERSE)
William Burns of Cupertino, Calif.
DC's Tangent version of the Joker bounces into existence from a McFarlane Toys Spawn Widow Maker body and a Toy Biz Water Wars Storm head. Tack on a Generation X Jubilee coat and arms and the sprightly hero from Dan Jurgens' Tangent Universe pops to life.



SANDMAN
Russell Walks of Billings, Mont.
The Golden Age Sandman sleepwalks out of some kinda Kenner Joker figure (and boy, there are lots of 'em).

HONORABLE MENTIONS

CAPTAIN REX (FROM STAR TOURS)
Jeff Tucker of Anaheim, Calif.
Originality! Woohoo! The goofball pilot from Walt Disney World/Disneyland's Star Tours attraction was created from nothing but household junk. Yes, ordinary junk, including some wood, paint brushes and other assorted items found under Jeff's bed.

GURI (FROM "SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE")
Sam Cummins of Waldorf, Md.
Xizor's vicious bodyguard Guri is sculpted from Polymer Clay over foil, some putty, resin and paint.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (**No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!**), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even email address to:

SUBMIT

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

A New Era for X-Men!

ART CONTEST

DRAW YOUR VERSION OF THE X-MEN FROM ANY TIME PERIOD!

Using your favorite lineup of X-Men, draw the team as if its members had appeared anytime other than in the 1990s. For example, the original four X-Men were created in the 1960s and it showed. But what would YOUR X-Men have looked like if they were around in the swingin' '50s? Or the roarin' '20s? What about one million B.C.? You decide, draw 'em up and send it on in.

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One lucky renegade wins the super-slick Wolverine Unmasked cold-cast statue, a copy of *The Essential X-Men* #1 and #2, an X-Men T-shirt, an X-Men key chain and the nifty *X-Men: The Ravages of Apocalypse* total *Quake* conversion PC CD-ROM game!

FIRST PRIZE (1): One lucky time traveler wins an X-Men T-shirt, an X-Men key chain and a copy of *The Essential X-Men* #1 and #2!

SECOND PRIZE (6): Six time bandits each win an X-Men T-shirt and a cool X-Men key chain!

Draw your X-team, fill out the entry form below and attach it to the back of the drawing. Include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back. The most creative artists get the prizes and will be featured in *Wizard*. Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, THE KEENEST BUNCH OF MUTANTS THIS SIDE O' THE MASON-DIXON LINE.

AGE BEFORE LEGAL TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Entertainment, their immediate families and Marty McFly. It's no fair, you have the advantage of already having been to the future, so you know what the team will look like. Plus you have that really cool car. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address, pants size and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "A New Era For X-Men!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) suck, but will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than November 4, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about October 14, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after October 14, 1998 send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "A New Era For X-Men!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"A New Era for X-Men!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118

"A New Era for X-Men!" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE September 30, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail address _____

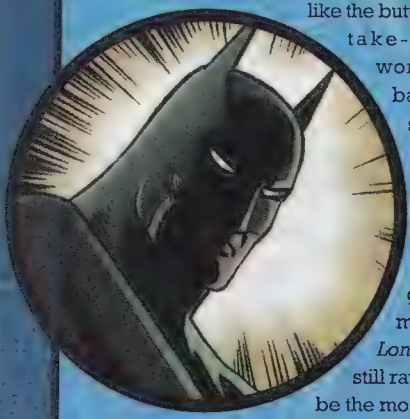
DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1 BATMAN

Ooooh, dramatic backlighting! It's always good for that moody, tough-guy look! Not like Bats needs any help lookin' like the butt-kickin', crook-whuppin', take-no-crud-from-man-woman-or-small-mammal badass he is. And, as the star of about eleventeen titles of his own, more "Elseworlds" one-shots and mini-series than you can shake Alfred at, the unstoppable juggernaut *JLA* and hit mini-series such as *The Long Halloween* (which fans still rave about), Bats just might be the most-published (read: most popular) guy in comics. Not bad for a freak who hangs out on rooftops all night and has a fetish for keeping around teenage boys in short pants.



2 WOLVERINE

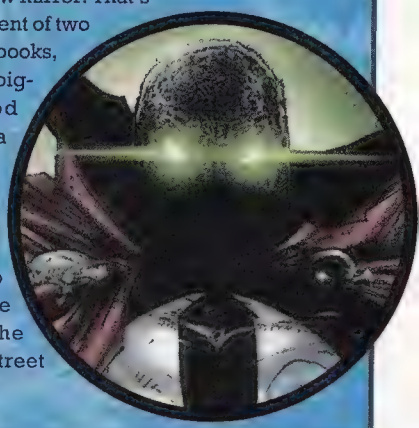
That ain't no head of hair! That's a blue-black lawn! A lawn fortified by Scott's Turf Builder Plus! A set of follicles that, even though they ain't adamantium-laced, could probably snap the blades right off a Toro 5300 lawn mower! To hell with this whole bone claws/adamantium claws debate. It ain't like Wolvie's *needs* metal on his claws when he can just head-butt some bad guy and have him flowin' red from the 17 holes he's gonna punch in his body with that mop of his. Is Wolverine a hairy engine of mass destruction? Yep. You bet. From head-to-toe.

3 WITCHBLADE

Nice lips. Y'know, after tossing out Arnim Zola and Sasquatch, li'l Miss Sara Pezzini is probably the most kissable character in comics. But it's more than just supermodel-quality pouty lips that land this generation's bearer of the Witchblade on our little countdown. Try stunning Michael Turner art, for starters. And try the fact that half the David Wohl-and-Christina Z. *Witchblade* writing team (specifically the Z. portion) is made up of chicks. Therefore, Witchblade as a character reads like—as scary as this concept may seem, fanboy—a real chick. So there's a lot there to love. Pucker up, Sara, baby.

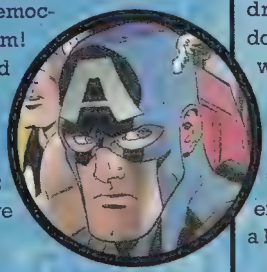
4 SPAWN

What if cars had green headlights? They'd be Spawn. And what if Spawn was a car? Judging from his level of popularity, we're betting he'd be a turbo-charged, hood-scooped, ram-air, 400-cubic-inch beast with leather seats, four on the floor and some of them fuzzy dice hanging from the rear-view mirror. That's the Detroit equivalent of two top-selling comic books, an HBO series, a big-time Hollywood movie and a sequel in the works. Oh, yeah—Spawn would also suck gas to the tune of about 1.2 miles to the gallon, but we're willing to bet that the average fan on the street wouldn't care.



5 CAPTAIN AMERICA

Hey! Cap's lookin' a bit worried here. And with good reason. He's always been the ever-vigilant protector of America's shores, fighting off whatever menace reared its ugly head. Nazis threatening our democracy? Cap was there to stop 'em! Commies at the door? Cap pushed 'em out! Alien Kree invading our nation? Cap stomped 'em but good! But the next menace? Cap's gearing up for the new British Invasion: Teletubbies! Dear God in Heaven, we hope he's up to the challenge.

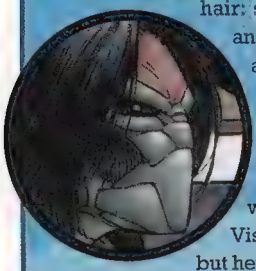


6 DEADPOOL

What's this? Deadpool's out in public in a torn and tattered mask? Doesn't he realize that's against Marvel Comics' dress code? Even if he did, we doubt that Wade Wilson, the mad-wisecrackin' merc-with-a-mouth, would pay much attention. And if anyone—like maybe some nosy-ass editor—tried enforcing the rule, 'Pool would probably just whack 'em and end that discussion quick-fast in a hurry. Hey, it pays bein' a big-time comic star. You get to make your own rules.

7 THE DARKNESS

Wolverine could take some styling tips from Jackie Estacado, that Darkness boy. Now *there's* a nice head of hair: silky-smooth, wonderfully lustrous and full of body! 'Course, since Jackie's a well-connected (and well-coifed) mob enforcer guy, he probably gets paid more per hit than Deadpool and can afford the finest in men's hair care products. One would think he could also afford some Visine to get the red out of them eyes, but hey—it's all part of that tough-guy look.

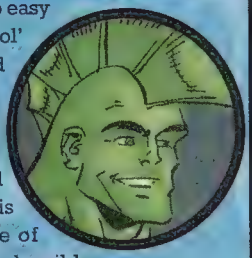


8 GREEN LANTERN (KYLE RAYNER)

This entry oughtta delight 51 percent of readers and piss off 49 percent. Why such a division? Kyle's been Green Lantern ever since former GL Hal Jordan went crazy four years ago. But the appearance of a time-traveling Hal in current issues of *Green Lantern* has fueled an 85 percent sales increase on *GL* in just two months! As the debate rages on (and Kyle gets just a *little* more support than Hal), one thing is sure: the green DC Comics sees comes from money.

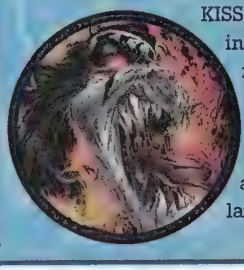
9 SAVAGE DRAGON

Now if you're the Dragon, it ain't so easy being green. Despite the fact that ol' fin-head's lookin' rather happy and chipper here, he's currently kinda...dead. But not to worry! This is comics! Everybody comes back to life! Dragon's scheduled for a more-or-less rebirth from his more-or-less death in a couple of months or so, and it's just this kinda wild, anything-can-happen tone in his book that makes the Dragon so durned popular.



10 THE DEMON

Brusha, brusha, brusha! With chompers like these, you'd probably go through about 12 toothbrushes each morning. But with Gene Simmons' money, it's no big deal—just buy more. The Demon, for those of you just joining us, is KISS bassist Gene Simmons' character in *KISS: The Psycho Circus*. And, as more and more fans glom on to *K:TPC*, the cult of KISS grows even larger. Kinda makes you wish you spent your youth spitting gasoline at torches instead of getting that law degree, huh?



MORT OF THE MONTH

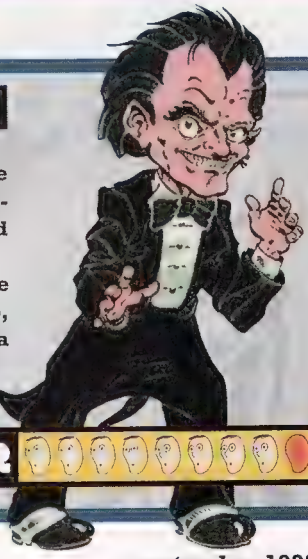
ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

DOCTOR PSYCHO

Honey, I shrunk the stage magician!

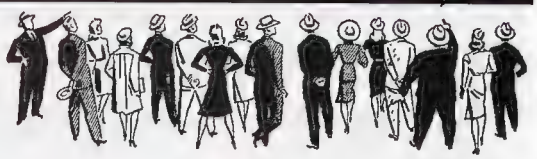
Young 3-foot-9-inch Doctor Psycho was laughed at by classmates because he was so damn short and because of what DC Comics termed an "unusually large head." So, like any picked-on dwarf, he got an attitude and studied psionics. Trust us—this happens a lot.

He figured out that by forcibly sucking ectoplasm (That's the substance of spirits, kiddies!) out of people, he could build stuff out of...spirit goop, we guess. So he built big, strappin' tuff-n-buff bodies for himself using a machine he called the (hee hee) "ectoplasmatron." He then got his ass handed to him by Wonder Woman on numerous occasions and continued being a midget.



MORTOMETER

PICKS



THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN AUGUST

PICK OF THE LITTER

book of the month

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN: STRANGE ENCOUNTER

MARVEL It's creepy! It's kooky! It's altogether ooky, whatever "ooky" is! It's the return (for one month, at least) of *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*. Woo-hoo! And it's also the first-ever, never-before-seen meeting between Spidey and Dr. Strange, as the pair take on a mystical menace that's snatching up New Yorkers like they were free candy or something. Kurt Busiek, Neil Vokes and Jay Geldhoff bring 48 pages on home for $5.99

300 #4 (OF 5)

DARK HORSE If you're born a Spartan, you're destined to do one of three things: 1) Decorate in a very plain, unadorned manner. 2) Play football at Michigan State. 3) Fight like Hell and never give up. Yep, the battle continues as 300 brave Spartan soldiers hold their ground against the massive Persian army. At stake? Only the future of democracy for the world. By Frank Miller and Lynn Varley. **MR $2.95**

AKIKO #27

SIRIUS Fifth-grade Earth girlie Akiko and her band of merry pranksters from the planet Smoo are on a quest. So they split into two groups to gather the items that the nasty Bornstone demands before he ponies up the potion that'll cure Professor Lunderdorf of his illness. And since one group contains Beeba and Spuckler (who just don't get along too well), you know the sparks are gonna fly. By Mark Crilley, who says, "The Beeba-Spuckler group gives you your madcap adventure. But the juiciest thing about this issue is that the *other* group contains Akiko and Prince Froptoppit, and the romantic subplot begins! Froptoppit is trying to convince Akiko to marry him, and she just might be starting to listen to his wooing." **$2.50**

ASTRO CITY #17

HOMAGE/IMAGE The straight life ain't so easy. Steeljack, a superpowered ex-con, is out of the joint and on the trail of a killer who's knockin' off small-fry supervillains. But if he wants to find the murderer, he might have to turn bad and risk headin' back to the big house. Better load up on soap-on-a-rope. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

AVENGERS #9

MARVEL Holy Moses! No, it's not the return of Dudley Moore, it's Moses Magnum, the man who tried to sink Japan! He's back, and this time he's got somethin' called the "Power Primal" at his command. Plus, we learn more about Wonder Man's strange existence, trapped between life and death as he is. Poor guy. By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

BATTLE CHASERS # 4

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Red Monika, that super-bad super-babe who looks kinda like two regulation-sized NBA

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

basketballs on legs, is bustin' *into* jail. Seems she's been hired to free a pirate from the notorious Skyhold Prison. But when four *additional* super-dangerous criminals bust out in the confusion, ya better believe it ain't no "Jailhouse Rock." By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. **$2.50**

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS

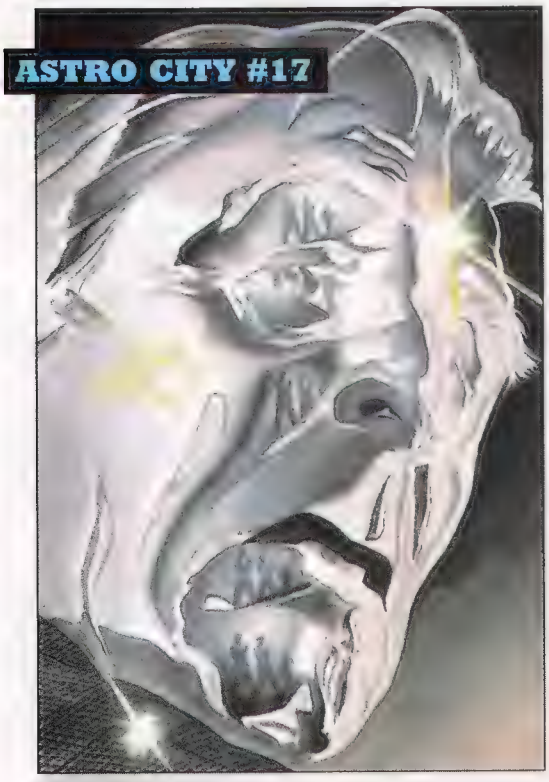
MARVEL Since we already had Mark Waid on the phone (see *Flash* #142), we figured we'd get the scoop on Cap. "In *Captain America* #10, people all across the globe who have achieved the American Dream are going berserk. Cap's gotta find out why, all the while going kinda berserk himself. And we go into the big Marvel hat and pull out an established villain who Cap has never fought before who's behind it all." And for the record, Waid says the big Marvel hat is "a fez, size 6 7/8." Meanwhile, in *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #2, Cap and the Invaders prevent Nazi sabotage in a World War II-era story. By Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang (*Cap*), and Waid and Ron Garney (*Cap: SoL*). **$1.99 EACH**

FLASH #142

DC COMICS Just when you thought it was safe to return to the comic shop: Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn return to writing *Flash*! According to Waid, #142 marks "the wedding of Wally West and longtime girlfriend Linda Park. This being Flash's wedding, there are superhero guests galore. And, as always happens at these things, something...unexpected...happens, which sets up a whole year of stories." Catering by Waid and Augustyn. Music by Pop Mhan. Chris Ivy is the flower girl. **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #105-#106

DC COMICS Time-displaced Green Lantern Hal Jordan, in an amazing display of good taste, pounds the bloody snot



newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

A-NEXT #1 **(MC-2/Marvel)** The next generation of Avengers unite in the spankin'-new "What If...?" line called MC-2. **$1.99**

ARSENAL #1 **(DC Comics)** Green Arrow's li'l sidekick Speedy is back! Now with 50 percent less heroin! Calling himself Arsenal, he's looking to kick Vandal Savage's immortal ass! **$2.50**

BATMAN VILLAINS SECRET FILES #1 **(DC Comics)** Secrets of Arkham Asylum! A quiz for prospective villains! And an *interview* with...the Joker? **$4.95**

BATMAN: I, JOKER **(DC Comics)** "Hero worship" takes on a whole new meaning as Batman is revered as a god in the Gotham of 2083. One potential "Joker" tries to break the cycle. **$4.95**

BLADE **(Marvel)** A mob rub-out in 1924 leads to a vampire turf war today. Blade, Marvel's half-human, half-vampire, soon-to-be movie star, is stuck right in the middle. **$5.99**

COVEN: BLACK AND WHITE #1 **(Awesome)** Short stories featuring Coven members Spellcaster, Fantom and Scratch are on the menu. The soup of the day is turkey noodle. **$2.95**

DARKCHYLDE: THE LEGACY #1 **(Majesty/Image)** Ariel Chylde gets the hell outta town just as a mysterious nemesis gets the hell *in* town. Expect a conflict, and Ariel's clothes to get ripped. **$2.50**

HAWKEYE: EARTH'S MIGHTIEST MARKSMAN #1 **(Marvel)** The Avengers' adventurous archer takes on the terrible Taskmaster. **$2.99**

MARTIAN MANHUNTER #0 **(DC Comics)** Fire bad! Superman and Batman guest star as J'onn J'onzz finds out why Martians are *really* afraid of fire. **$1.99**

MUTANT X #1 **(Marvel)** Long-time X-guy Havok gets sucked somewhere over the rainbow into a parallel dimension with a vampire Storm, killer Iceman, and bat-winged Angel. **$2.99**

PAINKILLER JANE/HELLBOY **(Event)** Mercenary Jane and occult expert Hellboy try to save Manhattan from a magical, mystical threat. **$2.95**

PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN/ELEKTRA '98 **(Marvel)** Elektra the assassin and Spider-Man the Spider-Man team up to bring down a mutated mob hitman. **$2.99**

PITT CREW #1 **(Full Bleed)** Warmaster Quagg–who we swear is *not* a West Coast rapper–batties a young Pitt in this tale from the past. **$2.50**

SPIDER-GIRL #0 **(MC-2/Marvel)** Hey! Peter and Mary Jane Parker had a "What If...?" daughter named May and she's carryin' on the family tradition. **$1.99**

STONE #1 **(Avalon Studios)** Heroic TV actor Gerry Alan gets sucked into being a *real* hero when mystical forces invade Earth. **$2.50**

SUPERMAN: THE DARK SIDE #1 **(DC Comics)** What if baby Kal-El (the tyke who would become Superman) landed on Apokolips instead of Earth? Our guess: it'd be a *bad* thing! **$4.95**

TERMINATOR SPECIAL **(Dark Horse)** A slew o' futuristic Terminators are out to kill young John Connor before he can save humanity. Now give us your pants! **$2.95**

out of former GLs Guy Gardner and John Stewart in #105. Then, in #106, the six-part "Emerald Knights" storyline wraps up as Hal battles current GL Kyle Rayner in the knuckle-duster to end all knuckle-dusters! Oh yeah, and some guy named Parallax kinda shows up.... By Ron Marz, Jeff Johnson and Bob Wiacek (#105) and Marz, Paul Pelletier and Terry Austin. (#106). **$1.99 EACH**

HITMAN #31

DC COMICS Hitman Tommy Monaghan is outta Gotham (There was an earthquake there! Don'tcha read the news?) and down in Africa on a job for the president of Tynanda. But when the job turns sour, Tommy's gotta beat feet...across the burning Tynandan plains. Without any water. Or nachos! Looks like Tommy flunked that "be prepared" lesson in Boy Scouts. By Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Andrew Chiu. **$2.50**

JLA #23

IRON MAN #9

MARVEL Fly the friendly skies in an airborne dogfight above the streets of Moscow! Iron Man finally gets to put a butt-whuppin' on the mystery foe who's been plaguing him since issue #1. But when the Russian-born Black Widow shows up, will she help him or harm him? Or make sure that his seat-back and tray table are in the upright and locked position? By Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen and Sean Parsons. **$1.99**

JLA #23

DC COMICS Starro the Conqueror, in his first appearance waaaay back in *Brave and the Bold* #28, looked like a giant, frosted novelty cookie. Today's Star Conqueror has already knocked out Superman, Green Lantern and Wonder Woman. Now he's lookin' to spank the rest of the JLA. Oh, yeah—he's also the size of a continent. We prefer the cookie. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.99**

JLA: YEAR ONE #10 (OF 12)

DC COMICS Judas! As the evil-as-all-hell double-secret organization known as Locus finally closes in on the rookie Justice League, one of the League's own members betrays the group! Someone's gonna get a stern talking-to from creators Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Barry Kitson and Michael Bair. **$1.99**

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA: THE NAIL #3 (OF 3)

DC COMICS They're just *too* evil! As if the two-timing debacle of *Year One* wasn't bad enough, the JLA "Elseworlds" *The Nail* sees the president of the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the *entire* White House staff assassinated by...a JLA member! Geez, aren't there any good guys left? By Alan Davis and Mark Farmer **$4.95**

MAJOR BUMMER #15

DC COMICS ARRGH! JLA overload! The final (Boo! Hiss!) issue of *Bummer* features a guest appearance by the JLA: The Joint Lous of America! Four different versions of Lou Martin team up to save life, the universe and everything. Finally, *someone* who's heroic! So long, Lou. We'll miss ya! Send thank-you notes to John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. **$2.50**

MINIMUM WAGE #10

FANTAGRAPHICS "Nuptials" is a cool word 'cause it sounds like it might be dirty, but it isn't. "Nuptials" actually means "marriage," which can lead to all sorts o' nice, dirty things. Anyhoo, Rob—the comic artist—and girlfriend Sylvia finally tie the knot in the semi-autobiographical tale by Bob Fingerman. **$2.95**

NIGHTWING #25

DC COMICS The old meets the new in this anniversary extravaganza as Nightwing—the guy who used to be Robin—gets a visit from the present-day Robin. The two lads talk about fighting technique, life with Batman, chicks and how to keep them short pants from riding up. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99**

PREACHER #42

VERTIGO/DC COMICS It's been nearly four years since preacher Jesse Custer's held down a regular job. So it's about time he gets himself some gainful employment. See him do just that in this issue, and also see the debut of a villain who *could* have been in *Wizard* #82's "Top 10 characters that sound more like porn stars" list: The Meatman! By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

ROBIN #58

DC COMICS Zits? Bad grades? Toenail fungus? All DC will tell us is that the Spoiler (Robin's kinda-sorta girlfriend) is facing "the biggest personal problem a teen-age girl can face"—and Robin's busy trying to get his school buddies out of trouble. No prom date? A short skirt and a strong breeze? What *is* it, already? Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch ain't spillin' the beans. **$1.99**

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SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #66

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Damn them chicks! If it isn't teen-age problems, it's infidelity! Dian Belmont, the one-and-only of Sandman Wesley Dodds, is scopin' other guys! And it's not like Wes can devote full time to problems at home, 'cause he's on the trail of a nasty killer called The Goblin. By Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE SHE-DRAGON #52

IMAGE What the monkey? Savage *She*-Dragon? Yep. Kinda looks that way. The She-Dragon continues on center stage since the He-Dragon is otherwise occupied being dead and stuff. So does she get off easy? Nope. She's gotta go toe-to-toe with a pissed-off god named Hercules. Another rippin' funny-book yarn by Erik Larsen. **$2.50**

NIGHTWING #25

STORMWATCH #10

IMAGE If quitters never win and winners never quit, then the StormWatch crew ain't winnin' much. After watching an alternate Earth go kablooey, the team wonders if they might be better off just hanging it up. Maybe. New racquetball leagues are forming and the lawn needs mowing anyway. By Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary. **$2.50**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #17

ABSTRACT STUDIO Waaaaay back in *Strangers in Paradise* #1 (of this here current series), we saw bestest buds Francine and Katchoo in the future. Only problem? They weren't exactly best of friends any more. In fact, they hadn't seen or even talked to each other for 10 years. Now, after 16 issues in the present, we finally go back to the

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

ALPHA FLIGHT #15 (Marvel) The team goes to a small Newfoundland town to investigate a strange fog. Highlights on The Weather Channel. **$1.99**

ASCENSION #9 (Top Cow/Image) Andromeda, accused of murder, gets booted out of Minea. See ya! **$2.50**

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Drug-scavenging gangsters invade Gotham's last operating hospital in *Batman* #559, while in *Detective Comics* #726, Batman must team up with the Joker (!) to solve a kidnapping case. **$1.99 each**

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #24 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Get ready for Pandemic, a new bad guy without sanity, fear or table manners. **$1.95**

DEADPOOL #21 (Marvel) Deadpool's got a battle suit. Prepare for hilarious hijinks. **$1.99**

FANTASTIC FOUR #10 (Marvel) Mr. Fantastic gets political and teams up with freedom fighters on the island nation of Genosha. **$1.99**

FATHOM #2 (Top Cow/Image) Aspen puts on her swim fins and heads down to the high-tech research facility, Deep Marine Discovery Inc. **$2.50**

GEN[13] #32 (WildStorm/Image) Lynch takes on Alex Fairchild as a Florida hurricane rocks the Gen[13] crew. **$2.50**

GEN[13] #32

JAY & SILENT BOB #3 (Oni Press) Monkey alert! Monkey alert! The story of the orangutan from the final scene of "Mallrats" is finally told in this Kevin Smith classic! **$2.95**

SPAWN #77 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Spawn seeks answers to the questions of his existence from the mysterious Cog. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) Green Goblin Norman Osborn receives a mysterious package in *Sensational Spider-Man* #32. The bad-ass Osborn sends a hit squad after Alison Mongrain in *Amazing Spider-Man* #440. Meanwhile, in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #96, *Daily Bugle* Publisher J. Jonah Jameson takes a shot at Osborn. And finally, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #262 features Osborn kicking back with a piña colada in a tall, frosted glass. We think Spidey's in there somewhere, though. **$1.99 each**

SPIRIT OF THE TAO #4 (Top Cow/Image) Jasmine and Lance contemplate killing friends infected by a deadly virus. Talk about tough love. **$2.50**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Nomi Sunrider rallies the Jedi Knights in *Tales of the Jedi–Redemption* #2. The Rogues rescue the treasonous Pestage in *X-Wing Rogue Squadron* #33. And Mara looks to take down a Black Sun crimelord in *Mara Jade–By the Emperor's Hand* #1. **$2.95 each**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Nasty-bad Dominus is looking to attain godhood in *Superman* #139 and only Big Blue bars his path. Time goes wild as dinosaurs and starships appear in Metropolis in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #11. *Superman: Save the Planet* features the last (!) edition of the *Daily Planet*, as Lex Luthor buys and shuts down the paper in *Adventures of Superman* #562. **$1.99 each; *Save the Planet*: $3.95**

TALES OF THE WITCHBLADE #6 (Top Cow/Image) A legendary Celtic Witchblade tale is told. Larry Bird scores 33 points and Bill Russell goes for 16 rebounds. **$2.95**

WOLVERINE #129 (Marvel) Wolvie heads back to Canada to meet the only character hairier than him: Wendigo! **$1.99**

ToyFare

THE TOY MAGAZINE #15

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EXCLUSIVE LIMITED
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ON SALE IN SEPTEMBER

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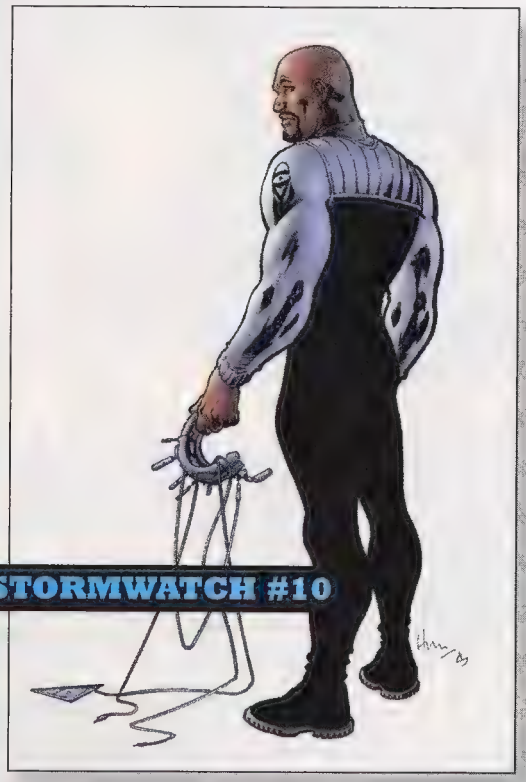
on the edge

CAPTAIN DINGLEBERRY #1

(UNDERHANDED COMICS) At least it's not a scratch-'n'-sniff book!

The smell of fear (oh, how we *hope* that's just fear) is thick in the air when Captain Dingleberry strikes! The Captain dispenses harsh justice against artsy, self-important types with the help of his trained dingleberry sidekicks: The Fecal Four! There's Super Turd, Crazy Eight, Boil and—God help us, we're not making this up—Runny. It's toilet humor at its most basic level. Are *you* scared of the merchandising possibilities? We sure are. **$2.95**

future to find out what could have split up two great friends. Written, penciled, inked and even lettered by Terry Moore. Terry says, "This is the story I've been trying to get at ever since I started *SiP*. This is the turning point. I've said it before, and it's true: Everything you've read so far is background material for this story to come. I told you the previous stories just so I could tell you *this* story." Sounds like "jumping-on point" to us. **$2.75**



STORMWATCH #10

SUPERMAN ADVENTURES #24

DC COMICS The Parasite is in Metropolis to rob a few banks, hand Superman his ass on a platter and generally be a public nuisance. He also wants to impress a girl. C'mon. Like bright purple skin and a name like "The Parasite" doesn't already make him the most drooled-after ladies' man since Marky Mark? By the alliterative Mark Millar and Aluir Amancio and the not-so-alliterative Terry Austin. **$1.99**

SUPERMAN FOR ALL SEASONS #2 (OF 4)

DC COMICS In this "Superman: Year One"-kind o' tale, young Clark Kent journeys to Metropolis and sets up housekeeping. And that ain't all. Writer Jeph Loeb promises that this issue also includes "terrorist attacks, missiles over Metropolis and the birth of a brand-new, Loeb-and-Sale-created supervillain that's never been seen in the Superman mythos, whatever a 'mytho' is." But even with all this hoo-hah both hooing and hahing, Loeb promises that the main focus is Lois Lane. "We show an early encounter between Lois and the Man of Steel and how Lois deals with the encounter." By Loeb and artist Tim Sale. **$4.95**

THOR #4

MARVEL Girl problems? Family problems? *Hardware* problems? Thor's got 'em all! Seems that Sedna, an ancient sea goddess, is lookin' for a boyfriend. And there's Thor just lookin' all tall, blonde and handsome! But if Thor ain't so crazy about a lifetime sleeping with the fishes (and he ain't), he may need to get some help from Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner. As if chicks weren't trouble enough, writer Dan Jurgens tells us, "We learn about a mysterious presence in Asgard and its connection to the missing gods. And Thor's hammer, the mystical Mjolnir, isn't responding to Thor's commands the way it should. And that leads us into an even *bigger* storyline...." Problems to the third power are brought to you by Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson, all for **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #19

MARVEL Wallace and Nadja Frost, come on down! You're the winners of *Wizard's Dark Book '98* "Create a Villain" contest, and *Thunderbolts* writer Kurt Busiek is more than happy to include your baddie in this issue—Charcoal, the Burning Man! "We got a ton of wild entries ranging from grim 'n' gritty, razor's-edge guys to absolutely goofy guys. I'll miss not using the Kissin' Frog, the Spore, or the Rapscallion. But the guy we picked has a good, solid concept behind him that fits right into our plan," Busiek says. Oh, yeah—the plan? A town is besieged by evil, and only the bad-turned-good-turned-bad-turned-good guys—the Thunderbolts—can save it. And Charcoal? "I like him!" Busiek says, "And I promise: This won't be the last time we see this guy." By Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #14

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Rogue journalist Spider Jerusalem is the Kenneth Starr of the future: His arch-

enemy is the president. But instead of hitting him with Whitewater and Monica Lewinsky, Spider hits the prez with the occasional (shudder) "bowel disrupter" and the power of the press. He also beats up an old lady this issue. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **$2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #360

MARVEL It's like old-home week at the mansion in Salem Center, N.Y., as Nightcrawler, Colossus and Kitty Pryde rejoin the X-Men! Only problem? Their first job is to take on a brand new team of mutants out to kill 'em. A new team calling themselves...the X-Men? Yikes! It's 48 pages-o-fun by Steve Seagle, Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend. **$3.99 (shiny, holographic cover); $2.99 (regular cover)**

X-MEN #80

MARVEL The X-madness continues from *Uncanny* #360 as Kitty Pryde's kidnapped by the evil X-Men and the good guys come to the rescue. But can they defeat the evil-X's big-time bad-ass leader, The Founder? An additional 48 pages of mutant mayhem by Joe Kelly, Brandon Peterson and Art Thibert. **$3.99 ("glint-glint" holographic cover); $2.99 (regular cover)**

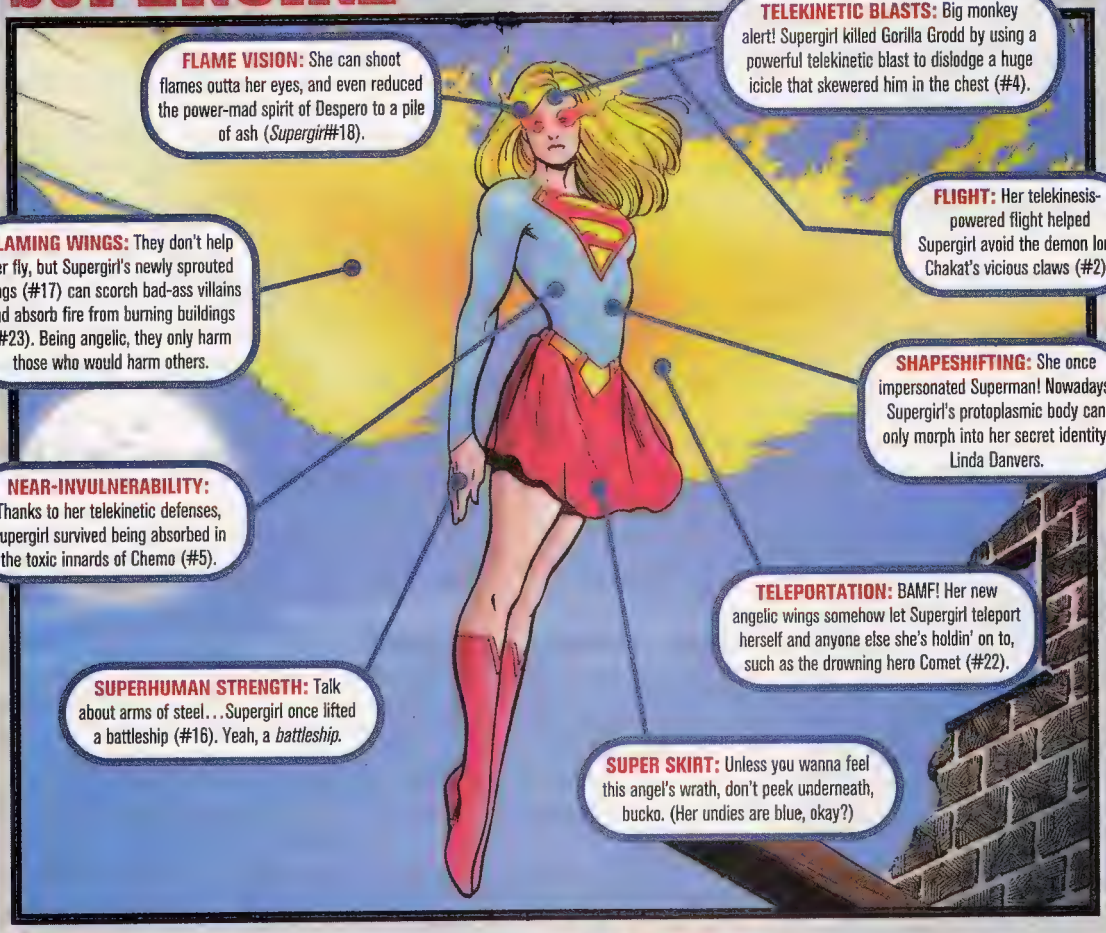
YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #17

DC COMICS Don't family reunions just suck? Young Hero Monstergirl is paid a visit by her uncle (Monsteruncle?), who just happens to be a giant, homicidal space alien. And you thought your grandpa's old World War II stories and Aunt Edna's casseroles were bad. By Dan Raspler, Dev Madan and Keith "Bubbly" Champagne. **$2.50**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

SUPERGIRL



ORIGIN

A shapeshifting lifeform from a destroyed parallel Earth, Supergirl was brought to our dimension by Superman and educated by the Kents. She worked and dated Lex Luthor for quite some time, until she realized he was manipulating her. Later, when she used her protoplasmic powers to save cult member Linda Danvers, their bodies, memories and souls merged. Supergirl's now one of three Earth-born angels here to protect the righteous from evil.

NOW APPEARING

Check out our fiery friend in *Supergirl* #26 this month. That issue will reveal the true identity of Comet, resolve Linda's parent's marital problems, identify the second Earth-born angel, and introduce a strangely familiar foe. "[As seen in issue #1], a lot of Supergirl's protoplasmic matter is gone," writer Peter David says. "But there are going to be ramifications of that—the protoplasmic matter has been somewhere this whole time. It's coming back, and it's pissed."

REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND MIKE SEARLE

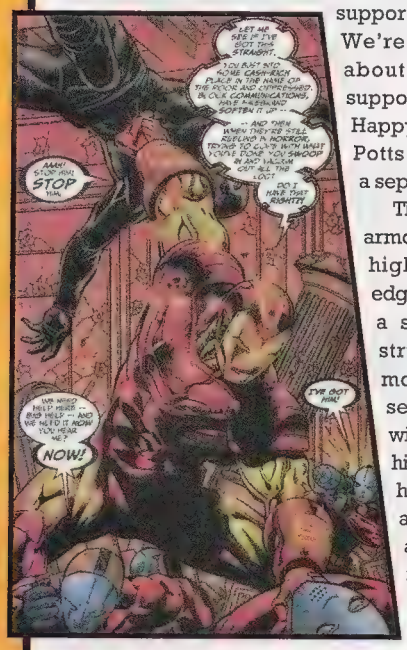
IRON MAN

Needs a little ironing out

ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#7
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen, Eric J. Cannon and Sean Parsons
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Mortally wounded by an act of industrial sabotage, billionaire genius Tony Stark saved his own life by designing a high-tech suit of armor. Today, Tony dons the suit to become a modern-day knight in shining armor, the superhero Iron Man.

The Good: The characters really shine in *Iron Man*. Though Tony's a billionaire, a technological genius, a ladies' man—stuff most of us can only dream of—the writing brings him down to a level readers can relate to. Tony has his problems with women; he cares about his friends; we even get a glimpse of his obsession with the Iron Man armor when he's forced to live without it as a prisoner of the villain Tuatara (issue #6). Plus, the supporting cast works well. We're made to care more about old-time *Iron Man* supporting characters like Happy Hogan and Pepper Potts as they go through a separation.



Then there's Iron Man's armor, which finally feels high-tech and cutting-edge. Whether it's testing a secret installation's structure with seismographic sensors or seeding a snowscape with mini-bombs from a hidden compartment in his glove (issue #2), the armor has weaponry and gizmos that'd make Bill Gates drool.

On top of all that, the clean, crisp artwork delivers a surprisingly formidable, yet fluid, suit of armor. Add superb coloring which enhances Iron Man in every scene, and you've got a spiffy-looking book.

The Bad: For all the great characterization, however, the plots in *Iron Man* are a little too formulaic. A standard issue goes something like this: Tony gets called in to solve a problem, a villain forces Iron Man into the picture, a big fight scene ensues and Iron Man wins. Yet, despite the straightforward plotting, the stories lack resolution and an enticing "gotta get the next issue!" cliffhanger. In the first six issues, every villain but the Dreadnoughts escapes, leaving open-ended finales, and not enough satisfying clues have been revealed to the book's biggest mystery: who's financing all these illegal operations and wants Tony dead?

Speaking of villains, where are they? The Dreadnoughts were cool, but instead of Iron Man crushing normal terrorists (issue #1), why not build up Shell-head's old rogues gallery like Whiplash, Crimson Dynamo and the Titanium Man?

The Buzz: Kurt Busiek's popularity places *Iron Man* consistently on the top 10 best-sellers list. Plus, issue #8 is slated to have Whiplash and Spymaster in it, which is a good sign for the book.

The Skinny: *Iron Man*'s back to basics...almost to a fault. These are the best *Iron Man* stories we've read in recent memory, but the plots are too straightforward to put the book over the top. Once the nuts and bolts include better villains and unexpected predicaments, *Iron Man* could be one of the strongest books around. ■

Iron Man's armor finally meets the '90s in this new series.

Instead of fighting terrorists every other issue, why not have Iron Man fight Crimson Dynamo or something?

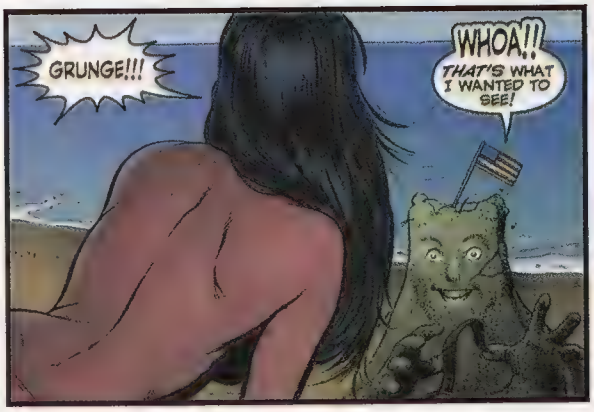
THE GRADE: B

GEN[13]

The Kids are so-so

ISSUES REVIEWED: #25–#30
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: WildStorm/Image
CREATIVE TEAM: John Arcudi, Gary Frank and Cam Smith
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: On the run from International Operations (I.O.), the Gen[13] gang (Fairchild, Grunge, Burnout, Rainmaker and Freefall) and their mentor John Lynch have relocated from New York to sunny Florida.



The Good: The kids are all right. And that's thanks to some nifty characterization. Whether it's Grunge's attempts to see Rainmaker naked (#30), Freefall's nervousness in contacting her mom, or Burnout's incessant whining, these kids have distinct personalities.

Also distinct is the intriguing use of the team's powers. Grunge camouflages himself as part of a brick wall to nail some bad guys (#27), and disguises himself as a sand castle to sneak a peek at Rainmaker (#30), while Freefall uses her gravity powers to make a villain so heavy he falls down (#29).

The artist does a great job with facial expressions, adding to the lighthearted feel of the book.

The Bad: Uh...where are the stories? Sure, there are a number of interesting subplots, but there's no meat to the book. Freefall's looking for her mom, Fairchild's coping with a potential evil future and the whole gang's on the run from I.O. But that's it. Other than that, the book's going in no direction.

Supporting cast? Besides Freefall's brief visit with her mom, there isn't one. These characters need to start hanging out with some other folks their own age.

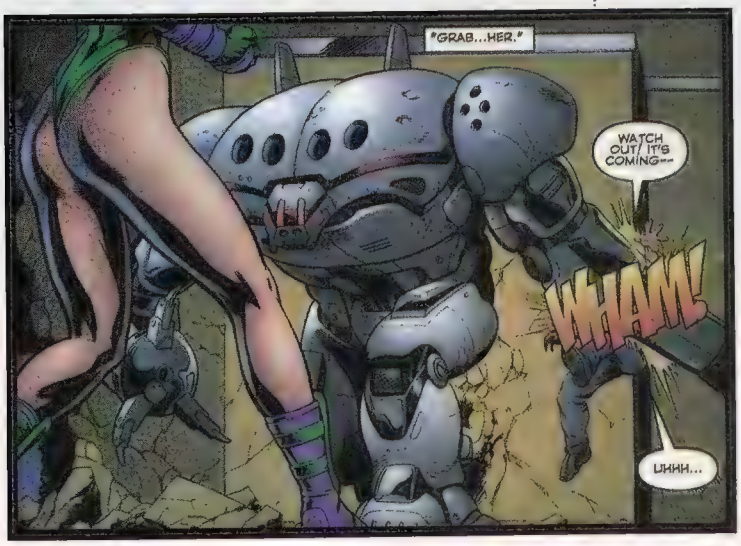
Villains? Let's see: there were the typical government goons, the big remote-controlled robot, a superpowered quadriplegic and a bunch of zombie robots. Talk about lame! For such a potentially powerful and fun supergroup, these guys haven't faced any cool foes yet.

At times, the series gets a bit too hokey. The team flies around in a jet (#29) to find Grunge's missing hand by..."sensing it" thousands of miles in the air. And in the same issue, the villain admits he can cancel all of Gen[13]'s powers because he tested his own powers. "Never mind how exactly," he says, ridiculously getting around that technicality.

Overall, it seems Gen[13]'s trying way too hard to be the X-Men. Lynch is quickly becoming the driven headmaster Professor X was. Gen[13]'s potential horrifying future is similar to the X-Men's "Days of Future Past." And besides having mutant-like powers, the Gen[13] teens are outlaws just like the X-Men.

The Buzz: Since artist J. Scott Campbell left the title, there ain't been much. Though that could change soon as the long-delayed animated "Gen[13]" movie may finally get on the schedule, as well as the upcoming toy line debut.

The Skinny: There's definitely some potential here, but these cool characters really need to be placed in some interesting stories, with some real villains and a direction in their lives. ■



Facial expressions and a unique take on the team's powers make this panel hysterical.

What's up with the team fighting clunky robots? Let's see some real villains.

THE GRADE: C

NIGHTWING
Some fly, some don't

ISSUES REVIEWED: #17-#22
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Nightwing, a.k.a. Dick Grayson and formerly the original Robin, is trying to clean up the seedy town of Blüdhaven. Working as a bartender by day, he dons his tights at night to cut down on the city-wide corruption.

The Good: Nightwing's a kick-ass character. He's got a great heart and thinks things through. While learning about Gotham's devastating earthquake (issue #19), Nightwing's out the door before the news report's even finished. And since Gotham's cut off from every land route, he takes a speedboat to Gotham's harbor. (Issue #19, in particular, is the best of the bunch with Nightwing trying to save a bus full of passengers, trapped in a crevice filling quickly with water; it's about as tense and exciting as any comic can get.)

The interaction between Nightwing and the heroine Oracle is awesome, and despite the keen detective skills he's picked up from Batman, Nightwing's use of Oracle's computer hacking is sensible. Even Dick's relationship with his landlord Clancy is interesting. Since the series began, the two of them finally get to go out on a date together (#22) only to see Dick make some feeble excuse to leave so he can clear up a Nightwing-related emergency.

Nightwing is slowly establishing his own grotesque rogues gallery. In addition to Blüdhaven's crimelord, the brutish genius Blockbuster, there's Inspector Soames, whose head was twisted 180 degrees around by Blockbuster. Soames recently learned that doctors can't surgically reverse his head (#17), or it'll kill him.

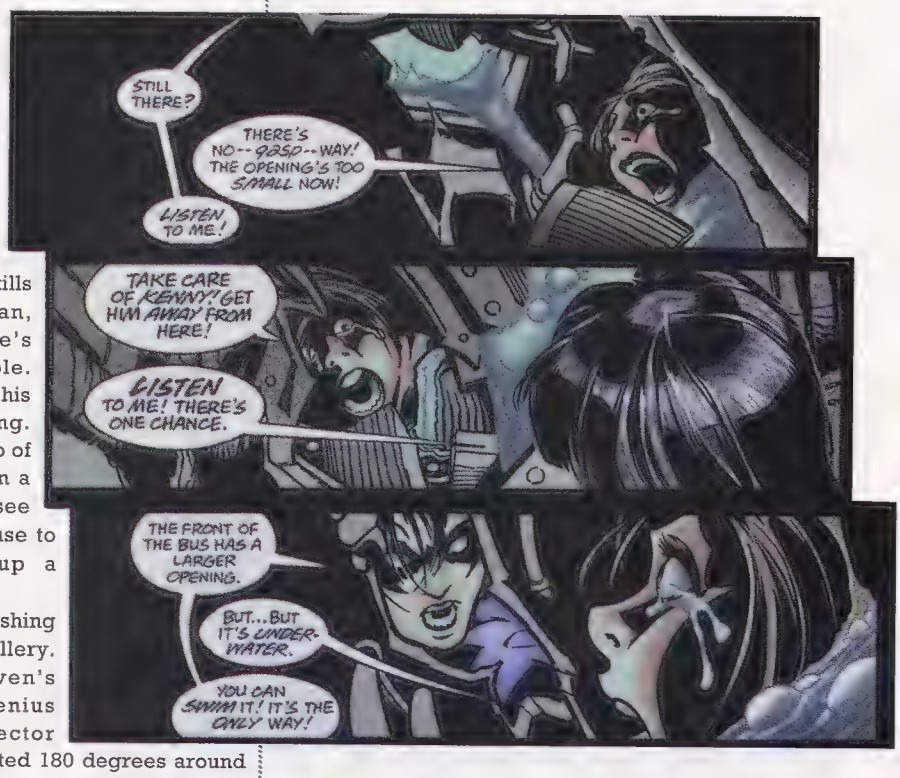
The run-down Blüdhaven itself is a great "character," a literal Hell on Earth. And, thanks to the book's unique art style, the town's appearance adds to the heavy mood in the book. Check out any issue's backgrounds to see subtle details like bullet holes in the walls.

The Bad: As cool as Nightwing is, his adventures are either really good or really clichéd. Issue #17-#18's Man-Bat/Deathstroke story is too played out for our tastes. We've been reading the whole "misunderstood monster being abused" approach since Spider-Man first met the Lizard eons ago. And in the second "Cataclysm" issue (#20) where Nightwing searches for Batman in the Batcave, nothing really happens (especially coming off of #19).

We're particularly disappointed at the portrayal of Deathstroke in #17-#18. Instead of a superhuman mercenary, we get an above-average hunter who seems out of character, especially considering the long history between him and Nightwing. (And what's with that ridiculous blue/gray costume? His original suit rocked!)

The Buzz: Aside from having a decent following, *Nightwing* is riding a boost from the recent Bat-crossover "Cataclysm."

The Skinny: Nightwing's a great character in a great setting, but inconsistent plots make this book either hit or miss. ■



When Nightwing *is good, it's* very good. *Issue #19 is a perfect example, as Nightwing tries to save a woman from drowning.*

THE GRADE: B

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STRANGEHAVEN

Extraordinary characters need better direction

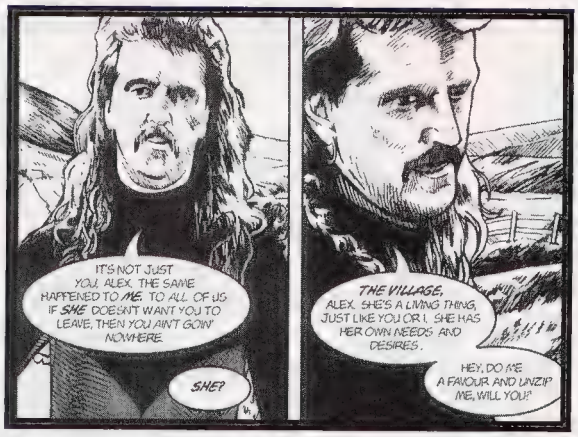
ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#9
GENRE: Adult supernatural mystery
PUBLISHER: Abiogenesis Press
CREATOR: Gary Spencer Millidge
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.95/Kinda quarterly

What You Need to Know: On vacation to get away from the problems of his life, school teacher Alex Hunter crashes his car and gets stranded in the weird but friendly village of Strangehaven—a place, for reasons unknown, that he is trapped in.

The Good: *Strangehaven* has an eclectic cast of characters: the quirky Mrs. McCreadie who Krazy Glues her own teeth; Kent the Constable who keeps a physical inventory on everyone in town, from fingernail clippings to hair fibers; Adam Douglas, the neighbor who believes he's an alien; and, of course, the main character Alex Hunter who's an everyday man with love troubles, trying to figure out the direction of his life. You actually feel like this town exists, full of real people, quirks and all. *Strangehaven*'s personalities are great, and the thought-provoking dialogue between them is even better. (See example above right.)

Then you've got the subplots: the "on again, off again" relationship between Alex and his "girlfriend" Janey, the creepy Knights of the Golden Light organization with its cultish costumes and the magical tree-girl Alex "hits" on his way into Strangehaven (issue #1). These mysteries are involving and keep you intrigued about the town and its inhabitants; you want to know more. However...

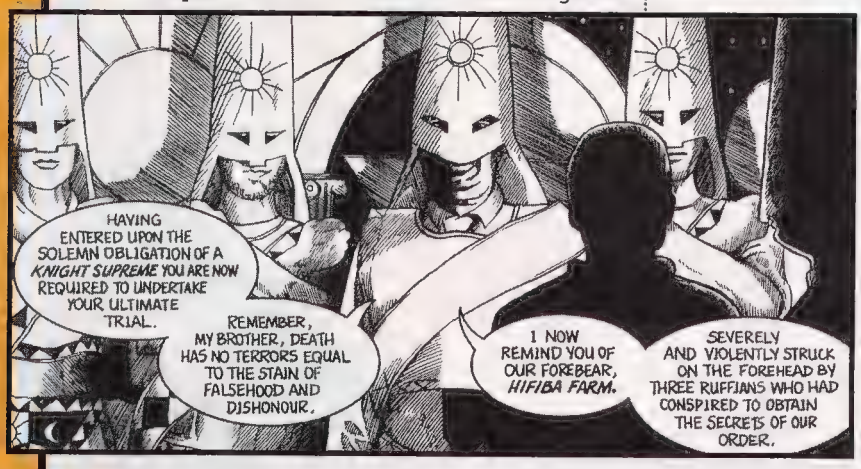
The Bad: There is no main plot, only a ton of subplots crawling along at the same time. Among them: Alex trying to escape the village, Alex and Janey's relationship and the secret scheme of The Knights of the Golden Light. *Strangehaven* suffers from *too* many good stories at once. The series needs more direction—more answers to key questions, loose ends tied up and a lot more forward motion.



And the inconsistent art only adds to the problem. While some scenes are lovely, others are poorly rendered and flat-out confusing like the auto repair scene in issue #1. A number of times it's taken us several panels to figure out which character is which, such as congregations with the Knights of the Golden Light or Janey's best friend Suzie, who looks completely different between her first appearance in issue #1 and subsequent issues. In a black-and-white book without coloring clues, more care has to be taken to alert the readers to who is who.

The Buzz: An independent title, *Strangehaven* comes out too infrequently to build up any momentum. But a trade paperback is collecting the first few issues is due out in July.

The Skinny: The king of subplots and curious characters, *Strangehaven* has an awful lot going on, but no central plot to forward the story. As slow going as the plot threads are, we're fascinated enough by the characters to keep this on our reading list.



The mystery of the escape-proof village is very intriguing. (And he's unzipping his wet suit, smart guy.)

The Knights of the Golden Light are but one of a zillion subplots. But with no main plot, the book lacks direction.

THE GRADE: B

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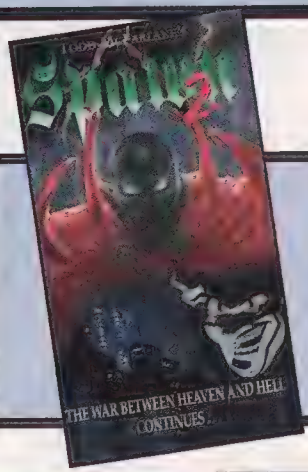

HBO Home Video's "Spawn 2" will be available in comic book and video stores everywhere on August 25, 1998. (Available in both Uncut Collector's Edition (for mature audiences) and Special Edited Edition (PG-13). Go get one!

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, HBO Home Video, Todd McFarlane Productions, their immediate families and members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Come on, the "Spawn" movie was definitely worthy of a nomination! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "'Spawn 2' HBO Home Video" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated by Clown entries. Winners will be selected by random drawing by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than November 4, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about October 14, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after October 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "'Spawn 2' HBO Home Video" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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GENDER BENDER

No one's what (s)he seems to be in Hiroshi Aro's 'Futaba-kun Change'

Make a left turn at "strange" and the path will probably lead right to *Futaba-kun Change*.

Take one group of girl-crazy school buddies, one insanely mischievous big sister who chases guys *and* girls, one dad who doubles as a beauty queen, a pair of mad-scientist school nurses, and the occasional man-eating plant or female wrestling team. Now mix 'em up into one big mish-mosh. Got the makings of a primo junior-high school comedy manga yet? Nope. Don't forget to add the hapless guy who periodically turns into a girl.

Until now, the gender-bender comedy manga niche has been neatly filled by Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma 1/2*. Amazingly, it seems there's room for one more. A new contender has arrived to these shores: Hiroshi Aro's *Futaba-kun Change*. Studio Ironcat, publisher of *Vampire Miyu* and *Cutie Honey*, brings Aro's comedy manga to the United States this summer.

Futaba Shimeru is a typical junior-high student who's about to discover that—thanks to a family curse—puberty brings on more than just the usual changes. When his buddies in the wrestling club slip him a girlie mag, he's overcome by his first genuine fit of lust and finds that the surge of hormones causes him to turn into—wait for it—a buxom girl!

This is *not* going to help him win the heart of the lovely Misaki Shima.

Now that Futaba has come into the family curse, his family—who have been hiding it from him—lose no time in rubbing his face in it. His dad turns out to be a top-line fashion model. His loony-toons older sister Futana gets her kicks hitting on men and changing into a guy when she gets them in bed—when she isn't busy undressing flustered Futaba with her eyes or convincing "her" that she's laid an egg during the night. And don't even ask about Futaba's classmates!

Hiroshi Aro isn't well-known in America, chiefly because his manga haven't been animated (anime is a lot easier to introduce to American fans than manga). But there is quite a following for *Futaba-kun Change* on the die-hard manga fan scene. "We received many messages from our readers asking us to translate *Futaba-kun Change*," Ironcat's president, Kuni Kimura, says.

NOVEL CONCEPT Who's wearing the pants in Misaki's (above) relationship with Futaba? No one.

While readers might suppose *Futaba-kun Change* is a take-off on the gender-swapping comedy *Ranma 1/2*, Aro says in one of his manga that he was actually inspired by another comedy, *Boku no Shotaiken*, a 1976 manga by Hikaru Yuzuki. Well, okay, but he's also made something of a living following in the footsteps of Takahashi. Back in the '80s when manga *Urusei Yatsura* reigned supreme, Aro launched *Yu and Mii*, a story about a cute female ghost who moves in with a hapless high-school student (more than a little reminiscent of Takahashi's *Urusei Yatsura*, a tale of the cute alien

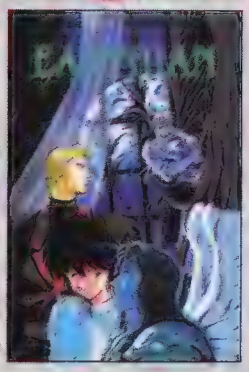
BY PAUL SUDLOW

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Earthian: The Beginning of the End

(AnimeWorks, 45 minutes each, $24.95 dubbed or subtitled)



The angelic people of planet Eden have long kept an eye on the inhabitants of Earth, and every 10,000 years or so they send pairs of angels there to judge humans—or Earthians as they call them—and weigh their vices against their virtues. Should the vices outweigh the virtues, the angels will destroy humanity.

At this particular juncture, the two angels sent are Kagetsuya and Chihaya, who play bad cop and good cop respectively. Chihaya, the junior angel, is already in the doghouse with Kagetsuya for showing his wings to a suffering person in Hong Kong (a big angel no-no), and doesn't improve things when he brings home a shell-shocked girl he's saved from a gang of well-heeled thugs.

Kagetsuya—who finds Chihaya's compassion for humans annoying—is all for throwing her out, but Chihaya talks him into letting her stay, thus drawing them into a wild web of cruel medical experiments, artificial humans and tortured love.

"Earthian" is based on a manga of the same name created by Yun Kouga. Kouga has a light, ethereal drawing style which translates well to the screen. Fans of shôjo (girls') comics—especially the work of female artist group Clamp (*X, Magic Knight Rayearth*)—should enjoy this four-part series. ■

WHITER THAN WHITE This "Earthian" robot certainly isn't at a loss–for floss, that is.

girl Lum who moves in with the hapless high-school student Ataru). And *Futaba-kun Change* debuted in Japan a few years after *Ranma 1/2* established itself as a bona fide hit, both as a manga and television series. Still, even if Aro's timing is a bit suspect, he manages to put his own spin on the premises, which often take his characters in different directions than those of Takahashi.

While Takahashi passes lightly over certain issues the sex-changing Ranma might have to deal with, Aro dives right in with relish. Ranma only has to contend with the attentions of upperclassman Kuno Kodachi. Futaba not only has to fend off his own sister and the school's resident cutie-pie lesbian, but thanks to a periodic release of sex pheromones, about half the population of Tokyo, too. (The half in pants, that is).

Like many gonzo comedy manga with school settings, *Futaba-kun Change* is a bit uneven in its pacing. In one story Futaba struggles to sort out his feelings about his girlfriend; in the next, giant plant creatures trash Tokyo. There's the feeling Aro is making all this up as he goes along. Plus, the constant use of super-deformed depictions of the characters gets a bit old.

Minor criticisms aside, *Futaba-kun Change* provides some great entertainment with clever stories that don't get too repetitive (given the one-trick pony nature of the premise), and a pair of likable protagonists in the form of Futaba and Misaki. According to Kimura, their strong relationship is what puts *Futaba-kun Change* ahead of *Ranma 1/2*. "Ranma and [his girlfriend] Akane are still two little kids who don't know how to relate to one another emotionally," he says. "Futaba and Misaki have a more complex relationship."

The antagonists, thankfully, are just as insanely outrageous as their *Ranma 1/2* counterparts. Big sister Futana, for one, makes *Ranma's* Nabiki Tendo (Akane's sister) look like Marsha Brady. With braces. (W)

Paul Sudlow spent the middle half of "Godzilla" outlining this article. Not that there was much else to do at the time.

SKOOL DAZE Futaba (right) embarasses himself in front of Misaki (left). Still, the worst is coming...

FYI

INFO

Futaba-kun Change debuted last month as a series of monthly 36-page black and white comics, retailing for $2.95 each. According to Kevin Bennett at Ironcat, graphic novels could eventually follow if the demand is there. By the way, don't hold your breath waiting for the "Futaba-kun Change" anime to be dubbed into English; there isn't one to import. For more inside info on *Futaba-kun Change* than anyone can shake a stick at, point any Web browser to **otakuworld.com/fkc/index.html** and let 'er rip. Or let *him* rip. Whatever.

MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN AUGUST

Dirty Pair: Biohazards trade paperback

DARK HORSE COMICS

Once upon a time, Eclipse Comics and Studio Proteus issued the first *Dirty Pair* graphic novel, and after nearly 10 years it's back in print courtesy of Dark Horse Comics. Kei and Yuri are government trouble consultants. Their code name is Lovely Angels, but the galaxy knows them as the Dirty Pair, thanks to their habit of destroying everything in their path. This comic, written by Toren Smith, marks Adam Warren's art debut. See death and mayhem! See Yuri infected with a viral bio-weapon! Meet the overly destructive Bloody Card! This reprint also features a short story which ran in the *San Diego Comic Con* program a few years ago. $12.95

Hyper Dolls #1

STUDIO IRONCAT

Hey, speaking of lovely tag-teams of terror, meet Miyu and Maika, two androids from outer space! You've seen the Pioneer videos, now live the adventure anew in the original manga by Shinpei Itoh. The smart 'n' sassy Hyper Dolls are on Earth to protect it from evil aliens, and naturally it isn't long before something big, mean and alien crashes into Tokyo and begins stomping around. Miyu and Maika leap into action to stop it, and it's a duel to the finish between the alien, the Hyper Dolls, and...cops and robbers? $2.95

Futaba-kun Change #2

STUDIO IRONCAT

Yep, we spotlighted this one last month, but considering our feature this month, we'd be remiss in skipping over it. This issue features the fallout from Futaba-chan's mad pantsless dash across campus from issue #1, as everyone at school speculates about who the mysterious girl might be. Futaba's buddies are hot to get her in their wrestling club for some contact sports, and Misaki, the object of his affection, is just trying to get his pants back to him. Meanwhile, poor Futaba is just worried he'll "girl out" in the middle of class. Talk about mutant angst—bet the X-Men never had to worry about stuff like this! For mature readers. $2.95

Gon Wild!

PARADOX PRESS

The fiercest and cutest little dinosaur since *Land of the Lost*'s Dopey is back and ready to rumble. *Gon Wild* collects Masashi Tanaka's sold-out books, *Here Today, Gon Tomorrow* and *Going, Going...Gon*, under one cover—all for less than the original two books cost separately. *Gon Wild* features an all-new cover by Tanaka, and seven wordless stories starring Gon and his adventures with all his lovable animal pals. $9.95

Robotech: Megastorm graphic novel

ANTARCTIC PRESS

When "Robotech: Macross" appeared on television in 1984, it launched a new era in North American anime fandom. The Macross saga continues going strong 14 years later, and there's no better way to get your fix than in *Megastorm*. The SDF-1 and Macross island folded out into the orbit of Pluto when the giant alien Zentraedi attacked Earth, and it's a long trip back home. The crew of the SDF-1 discover a secret Zentraedi base in Jupiter's orbit, and must fend off the attacks of Commander Kohrah and wave after wave of battle pods. *Megastorm*'s got gripping space opera, tense drama, a battle against terrifying odds—and it's in full color. Well, okay, it's also got annoying crooner Lynn Minmay, but at least you can't hear her sing. $7.95

Chirality Gallery

CPM MANGA

Yes, it looks just like a pin-up book featuring the comely lasses of Satoshi Urushihara's series *Chirality*! But it's more than that: it's also a charity function. All proceeds collected from the sales of this book will be donated to the House of Hope charity in Japan to help children orphaned in the 1995 Kobe earthquake. Some of the confirmed contributors include Urushihara, Stan Sakai (*Usagi Yojimbo*), Dave Finch (*Ascension*), Jeff Matsuda (*X-Factor*), Brian Stelfreeze (*Marvel Masterpieces*), Colleen Doran (*A Distant Soil*) and Mark Crilley (*Akiko*). It's for mature readers—not that there'll be much to read. $3.95 ■

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

THOR THUNDERS!

The Odinson's debut fuels the "Heroes Return" heat

It's *finally* hammer time for Thor. Half a year after its "Heroes Return" brothers...uh... returned, the straggler of the group, *Thor* #1, hit comic shops in May and sold fast 'n' furious. Many stores sold out of initial orders, and copies of #1 are already going for $4 in some areas.

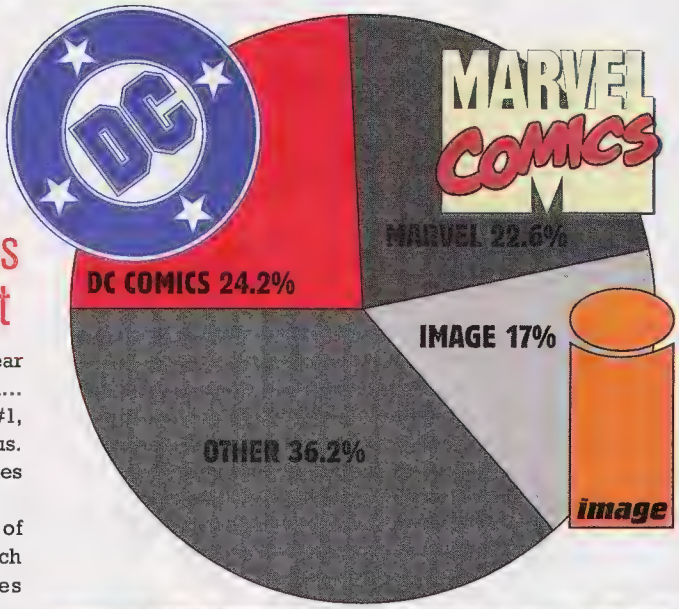
The new *Thor* has done Marvel a world of good in a number of ways, not the least of which has been reinvigorating the other "Heroes Return" titles: *Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*. The six-month-old "Return" hype had largely died down, but dealers now report that new interest—coming from the Norse god of thunder—is keeping the books selling strong across the board.

Be advised, collectors! As with the other "Return" books, *Thor* has a few oddities:

• **No. 1 variants**—A "Sunburst" variant (logo lit like a sunburst, given to comic stores as a premium) is out there for *Thor*, just like all the other "Heroes Return" #1 issues. Also, a black-and-red cover by penciler John Romita Jr., exclusive to comic merchandiser Dynamic Forces and limited to 10,000 copies, is available. The Dynamic copies sold out and are already going for big bucks on the back-issue market.

• **"Two for #2" covers**—Marvel continues its policy of offering alternate covers for each new #2 issue of an ongoing title. *Thor* #2 has two different covers by Romita, both available to retailers in whatever quantities they wanted to order. Completists take note.

CHARGED UP The Dynamic Forces *Thor* #1 sold out lightning-fast.



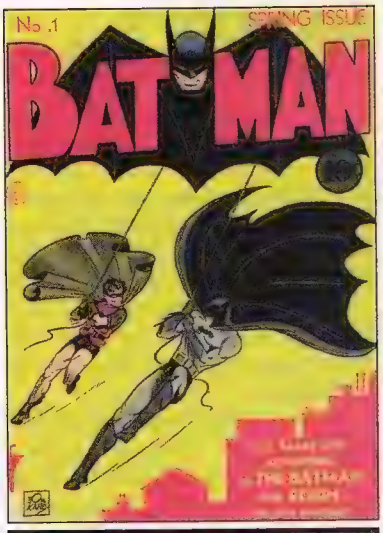
PIECE OF PIE Marvel sells more books, but DC is kickin' butt in total dollars sold. (Source: Diamond Comic Distributors Top Comics and Magazine Dollar Shares, June 1998.)

WE'RE NO. 1!

Who said that? DC Comics? Marvel? Maybe both. And the funny thing? They're both right.

Marvel, the traditional market leader, still sells more total comics than DC. But Marvel cover prices rarely venture above a $2.99 plateau, while DC loads the shelves with $4.95 and $5.95 "Prestige Format" books. The result? DC has been beating Marvel in terms of total dollars sold in each of the last few months.

Steve Brown, vice president of Shinder's, the nation's fourth-largest storefront comic retailer, says his company ordered more dollars worth of DC properties than Marvel product for the first time in *12 years* in May. "Fandom at large is beginning to appreciate DC's consistency," Brown said. He also said DC is closing the gap in number of books. "We had a lot of DC sellouts in May, too." (See graph for breakdown.)



HOLY MOOLAH! *Batman* #1 went for big bucks.

GOING ONCE... TWICE... SOLD!

Beyond the realm of new releases and geeky, who-could-beat-who arguments at the local comic shop, there exists a world where Golden and Silver Age comics are bought and sold. And perhaps the biggest stage they're traded on? Sotheby's auction house in New York City, where the market gathers for an annual comic auction. Here are some key items from Sotheby's June 5, 1998, auction and what each means:

- **Batman #1**—Only 250 copies of *Batman* #1 have ever been located, so this Fine-grade copy auctioned for $21,850, well over the guide value of $18,000. This copy belonged to Dick Sprang, a Golden Age *Batman* artist and someone condition freaks could learn a lesson from: Sprang kept his books in cool, dry, metal file cabinets, and his copies are considered among the era's finest.
- **Superman (vol. 1) #1**—In terms of historical value, *Superman* #1 often is considered second only to *Action Comics* #1. And since only 190 copies of *Superman* #1 are known to exist, this Good-condition book nabbed $13,800.
- **(Uncanny) X-Men #1-#3, #5-#66, #94-#96, Giant-Size #1**—Sotheby's sometimes groups comics, and this X-collector's dream sold for a healthy $6,325.
- **Silver Age Marvel**—Again, condition is key! A set of *Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, *Fantastic Four* #1, and *Incredible Hulk* #1 in Good condition was valued at $6,000 to $9,000 as a group, but

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, KELLY, DAVID, SMITH, ADAM KUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER, WARD, Z. BY PAUL SCHRADE; MORRISON BY BOB MARTIN; ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANKENSHOW. SCRALLS COURTESY OF STEVE SCALISE; BACHALO COURTESY OF MARVEL COMICS; PEREZ BY BRIAN SMITH.

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

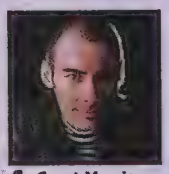
These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard*'s Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Astro City, Avengers

2. Joe Kelly
Deadpool, X-Men

3. Mark Waid
Captain America, JLA: Year One



4. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

5. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

6. Steven T. Seagle
Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight

7. Peter David
Supergirl, Young Justice

8. Kevin Smith
Clerks, upcoming: *Daredevil*

9. Matt Wagner
Mage: The Hero Defined

10. Christina Z.
Witchblade

ARTISTS

1. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

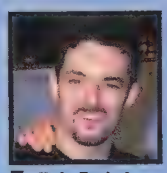
2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. Jim Lee
Divine Right

4. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

5. Alex Ross
Superman: PoE

6. Andy Kubert
Captain America



7. Chris Bachalo
Uncanny X-Men

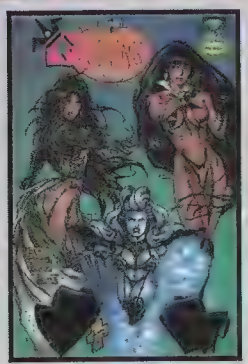
8. Adam Kubert
upcoming: *X-Men*

9. George Pérez
Avengers

10. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.:Spider-Man

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS



QUEENS OF HALLOWEEN ASHCAN #1

They're called "ashcans" for a reason, since they usually get pitched in the trash with used snot rags. But this freebie Halloween '97 sampler put out by Diamond Comic Distributors could be a real sleeper.

See, there's an original Witchblade story in here available *nowhere* else. And if there's one thing we know about Witchblade, it's that the character has been one of the hottest things on the market for three years now. Thing is? No one seems to know about this book.

Is this something *Witchblade* readers would buy if only they knew about it? You bet. ■ **LP**

failed to make minimum bid. But a Very Fine copy of Spidey's first appearance, *Amazing Fantasy* #15, grabbed $13,800 all by itself, while a Near Mint *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 pulled down $12,650.

• **Original art**—It's a booming market for these unique pieces. The Carmine Infantino original cover to *Showcase* #14, an early Silver Age Flash appearance, went for $20,700. The *World's Finest* #47 cover by artist Win Mortimer—only four Golden Age *World's Finest* covers are known to exist—went for $10,350, while John Romita's *Amazing Spider-Man* #53 cover earned $12,650.

• **Unpublished drawings**—An unpublished Jack Kirby piece featuring the Silver Surfer and Dr. Doom, appraised at $3,500 to $4,500, brought $9,200. Most of Kirby's work was inked, so raw Kirby pencils such as this are extremely rare. And even a little Batman and Robin crayon doodle by Batman creator Bob Kane sold for $402.

WONDER BOY The former Robin is taking flight.

NIGHTWING NARROWS THE BATMAN GAP

Looks like the student has almost overtaken the teacher.

Dick Grayson, the original Robin—now called Nightwing and starring in a series all his own—is whipping up a fan following to rival Batman. In fact, *Nightwing* now undersells *Batman* in the direct market by a slender few thousand copies each month. And in the back-issue market? *Nightwing* is kicking butt.

Bat-fans spread their dollars over a multitude of Batman books, restraining price increases for back issues. But with only 24 issues of *Nightwing* out there, the series remains easily attainable for most collectors. And many are snatching these up. Dealers report hot-and-heavy action on *Nightwing*, especially the "Cataclysm" crossover issues, #19 and #20.

Lars Pearson is, in actuality, the Norse god of waffles and hot cocoa.

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Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

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Eldorado Comics
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Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

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(423) 490-0501

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Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

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Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
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Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
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San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
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TOP 10 comics

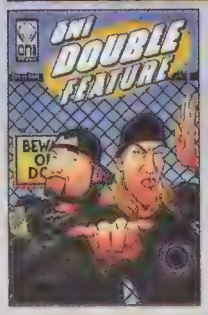
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 BATTLE CHASERS #1

WRITERS: J. Madureira and M. Sharrieff
ARTISTS: J. Madureira and T. McWeeney

Remember last issue, when we told you this here funnybook would be stickin' around the top 10 for quite some time? We didn't realize just how right we were–this book was drastically under-ordered, making one of the hottest comics in the land also one of the scarcest. And you know what that means! Well, a second printing, for starters. But other'n that, it means Joe Mad's latest etchin' and sketchin' is prized more highly than Elvis' sweat. **LAST MONTH:** 1

2 ONI DOUBLE FEATURE #1



WRITERS: K. Smith and J. and A. Pander
ARTISTS: M. Wagner and the Pander brothers

First appearances are always a good acorn to squirrel away. And this little chestnut happens to be the very first appearance of those movie stars and cultural icons (God help us), Jay and Silent Bob. Ain't no frontin', the kids dig 'em. This is also the first comic book to feature an...er...overexcited pooch toasted on drugs. That is, unless you count that Speedy mini-series from the 1970s everyone would really rather forget. **LAST MONTH:** 6

3 THOR #1

WRITER: Dan Jurgens
ARTISTS: John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson

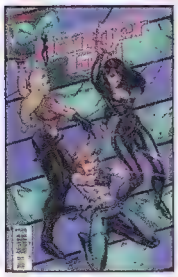
One word comes to mind when discussing this brand-spankin' new entry to our top 10: huge. The hero? Huge. The fan reaction? Huge. Thor's blond tresses? Kinda femme, but still huge! And most of all, this is the first-ever #1 issue for the God of Thunder. And you know what that is, gentlefolk? You got it. Huge. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

4 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: A. Medina and K. Conrad

Everything goes better with freaky face paint. Halloween. Wrestling. Hookers. And, most of all, comic books. Need proof? *KISS: The Psycho Circus* has been a top 10 juggernaut for its entire existence, and it shows little sign of slowing down. If the folks behind *Steel* ever discover face paint...well, it'd still suck. Never mind. **LAST MONTH:** 2

5 DANGER GIRL #1



WRITERS: J. Scott Campbell and A. Hartnell
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and A. Garner

J. Scott Campbell's real name is Jeff. Why does this shining young talent need an alias? Because *Danger Girl* is drivin' kids into a frenzy. And saying the Cliffhanger line is hot is like saying a kidney shot with a pickax is "uncomfortable." It's a teeny-weeny understatement. **LAST MONTH:** 9

6 CLERKS #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTIST: Jim Mahfood

Budding comics superstar Kevin Smith (everything he touches goes white-hot, no foolin') found the formula for success here: it's a comic book in which two guys search for Star Wars toys. Also mining this formula are *Wizard* and *ToyFare*, two fine magazines from the good folks at Wizard Entertainment Group. Do we get our bonus now, Gareb? **LAST MONTH:** 3

7 JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

This is what we'd call a plateau. Holding the same ranking as last month, the first *JLA* continues to hold our top 10 in a death-lock. Put the world's biggest superheroes in one comic title and it's bound to be successful. That's one reason *JLA* #17 ain't on this list. Plastic Man? Whatever. **LAST MONTH:** 7

8 WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: D. Wohl, B. Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

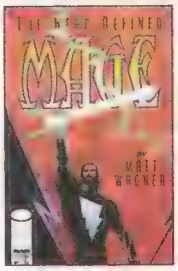
The beginning of the end for *Witchblade* #1? This month it plummets from no. 4 to–gasp!–no. 8! Can a world without *Witchblade* even exist? Will reality fold up into a paper hat and exit stage left on Satan's head? Tune in next month, when *Witchblade* will–probably be here again. **LAST MONTH:** 4

9 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: J. Madureira, A. Smith, T. Townsend, V. Russell and D. Panosian

Ever get the feeling Gambit wasn't supposed to stick around? Back around *Uncanny* #265, Gambit's first cameo, writer Chris Claremont probably thought, "Lessee, guy in trench coat who whips playing cards, I'll call him Gambit, have him fall under a bus in #272." Now Claremont's back at Marvel–and Gambit disappears! Coincidence? **LAST MONTH:** 5

10 MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #1



WRITER: Matt Wagner
ARTIST: Matt Wagner

Give it up! No amount of preparation can, um...prepare you for MATT WAGNER-MANIA! It's sweeping the country...nay, the WORLD like a grease fire! Actually, this here's a high-profile Image book from one of comicdom's most respected storytellers. But we wanna say it one more time, nonetheless: MATT WAGNER-MANIA! Thank you. **LAST MONTH:** N.R.

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **JUNE**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

At issue's end, Marvel announced *Team X 2000*, a new series due in December.

1. Uncanny X-Men #358 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #78 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #75 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
4. Danger Girl #3 (Cliffhanger/Image)
5. Avengers #7 (Marvel)
6. Wolverine #127 (Marvel)
7. Fantastic Four #8 (Marvel)
8. Thor #2 (Marvel)
9. JLA #21 (DC)
10. Captain America #8 (Marvel)
11. Iron Man #7 (Marvel)
12. Witchblade #24 (Top Cow/Image)
13. Battle Chasers #3 (Cliffhanger/Image)
14. Darkness #16 (Top Cow/Image)
15. Curse of the Spawn #22 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
16. Incredible Hulk #467 (Marvel)
17. Crimson #2 (Cliffhanger/Image)
18. JLA: Year One #8 (DC)
19. Amazing Spider-Man #437 (Marvel)
20. Generation X #41 (Marvel)
21. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #8 (WildStorm/Image)
22. Justice League of America: The Nail #1 (DC)
23. Rampaging Hulk #1 (Marvel)
24. X-Force #80 (Marvel)
25. X-Factor #148 (Marvel)
26. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #94 (Marvel)
27. X-Man #41 (Marvel)
28. Spectacular Spider-Man #260 (Marvel)
29. Spirit of the Tao #2 (Top Cow/Image)
30. Cable #57 (Marvel)
31. Sensational Spider-Man #30 (Marvel)
32. Ascension #8 (Top Cow/Image)
33. JLA: World Without Grown-Ups #1 (DC)
34. Superman #137 (DC)
35. JLA Secret Files #2 (DC)
36. Green Lantern #101 (DC)
37. Green Lantern #102 (DC)
38. Gen^{13} #30 (WildStorm/Image)
39. Adventures of Superman #560 (DC)
40. Action Comics #747 (DC)
41. Superman: The Man of Steel #82 (DC)
42. KISS: The Psycho Circus #11 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
43. Marvel Annual '98: X-Men and Hulk (Marvel)
44. Batman #557 (DC)
45. Excalibur #123 (Marvel)
46. Thunderbolts #17 (Marvel)
47. Astro City #16 (Homage/Image)
48. Detective Comics #724 (DC)
49. Nightwing #23 (DC)
50. Gen^{13}/Monkeyman and O'Brien #1 (WildStorm/Image)
51. 300 #2 (Dark Horse)
52. Preacher #40 (Vertigo/DC)
53. Deadpool #19 (Marvel)
54. Alpha Flight #13 (Marvel)
55. Re:Gex #1 (Awesome)
56. The Tenth #10 (Image)
57. Flash #140 (DC)
58. WildC.A.T.s #50 (WildStorm/Image)
59. Nightwing and Huntress #4 (DC)
60. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #77 (DC)
61. Robin #56 (DC)
62. Supergirl #24 (DC)
63. Catwoman #60 (DC)
64. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #109 (DC)
65. Batman 80-Page Giant #1 (DC)
66. Wonder Woman #138 (DC)
67. Quicksilver #10 (Marvel)
68. Marvel Annual '98: Hulk and Sub-Mariner (Marvel)
69. Iron Man: The Iron Age #1 (Marvel)
70. Jay and Silent Bob #1 (Oni Press)
71. Jim Lee's C•23 #3 (WildStorm/Image)
72. What If...? #111 (Marvel)
73. Spider-Man Unlimited #21 (DC)
74. Pint-Sized X-Babies Murderama (Marvel)
75. Legends of the DC Universe #7 (DC)
76. Catwoman/Wildcat #1 (DC)
77. Marvel Annual '98: Silver Surfer and Thor (Marvel)
78. Lady Death #6 (Chaos!)
79. Pitt #18 (Full Bleed)
80. Vampirella/Shi: Queen's Gambit #1 (Harris)
81. WildCORE #6 (WildStorm/Image)
82. S. Wars: Shadows of the Empire—Evolution #5 (D.H.)
83. Flash 80-Page Giant #1 (DC)
84. Marvel Universe #3 (Marvel)
85. Gen^{12} #5 (WildStorm/Image)
86. Green Arrow #135 (DC)
87. Heroes for Hire #14 (Marvel)
88. Starman #45 (DC)
89. Silver Surfer #142 (Marvel)
90. Mage: The Hero Defined #9 (Image)
91. Batman: The Scottish Connection (DC)
92. Xena: Warrior Princess—Blood Lines #2 (Topps)
93. Xena: Warrior Princess—Original Olympics #1 (Topps)
94. Gen^{13} Bootleg #19 (WildStorm/Image)
95. Iron Fist #2 (Marvel)
96. Star Wars: X-Wing R.S.—Masquerade #4 (D.H.)
97. Aquaman #47 (DC)
98. Teen Titans #23 (DC)
99. Daredevil #378 (Marvel)
100. Ka-Zar #16 (Marvel)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

YOU GO, GIRL!

Danger Girl #3 and Battle Chasers #3 (Nos. 4, 13)

Here comes *Danger Girl*, and look how she bounces! Though #2 issues get hit in sales, hot books often rebound once retailers start selling out and realize the book makes moolah. Aided by three variant covers, *Danger Girl* gets a gargantuan 50 percent boost, and *Battle Chasers* rises 25 percent without any variant hoo-hah. Face it: Image's new Cliffhanger line is kickin' butt.

Incredible Hulk #467 and Rampaging Hulk #1 (Nos. 16, 23)

It's the end of an era: With issue #467, Peter David's 12-year run writing *Incredible Hulk* came to a close. And though the beer, chips and salsa that accompanied the last episode of "Seinfeld" weren't present, a lot of readers obviously tuned in. It's also penciler Adam Kubert's swan song, and this landmark issue might have helped the retrospective *Rampaging Hulk* series get off to a gamma-powered start.

Re:Gex #1 (No. 55)

Awesome Entertainment lost some financial backing and a lot of steam, but hey–pretty much everything they previously published has done *mucho* well on the secondary market. So retailer confidence is high and orders on *Re:Gex*, the science-meets-magic tale from Rob Liefeld and Jeph Loeb, are strong.

The Tenth #10 (No. 56)

Synchronicity! *The Tenth* #10 gets a 10 percent sales hike this month–We couldn't have planned it better. And the boost comes without variants, crossovers or gimmicks of any kind. It's just that this Tony Daniel-created book about a morphing, monstrous creature and his young female friend is showing slow and steady progress every month.

Jay And Silent Bob #1 (No. 70)

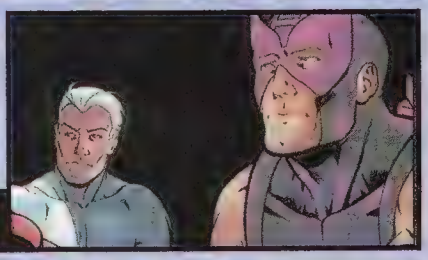
Li'l Oni Press finally cracks the "Top 100" with a mini-series about Jay and Silent Bob, the anti-social duo featured in the Kevin Smith movies "Clerks," "Mallrats" and "Chasing Amy." Smith himself wrote this issue, bridging the title characters' story between "Amy" and his next film, "Dogma." Anything Kevin Smith is big bank these days, and comic sales are finally starting to show it.

Mage: The Hero Defined #9 (No. 90)

Here's how "Top 100" can sometimes fool ya: *Mage: The Hero Defined* has been blazin' on the back-issue market. Yet #9 comes in 15 places *lower* than *Mage: THD* #8. That's because a buncha new #1's, big-time mini-series and annuals are hogging many of the top slots this month. In *Mage*'s case, actual sales didn't slip *one bit*, but its ranking dropped.

CLOSE-UPLOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comics Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



LIGHTNING QUICK! The "Live Kree or Die" crossover bounced Quicksilver up the charts.

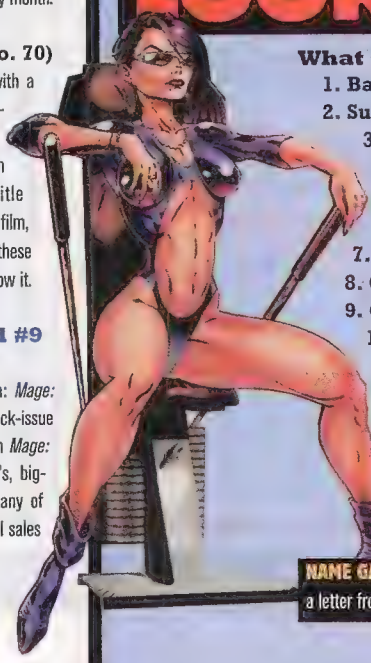
TOP 10 CHART GAINS

1. Quicksilver #10 (No. 67, up 48 slots)
2. WildC.A.T.s #50 (No. 58, up 33)
3. Battle Chasers #3 (No. 13, up 11)
4. The Tenth #10 (No. 56, up 9)
5. Danger Girl #3 (No. 4, up 8)
6. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #8 (No. 21, up 6)
7. Legends of the DC Universe #7 (No. 75, up 4)
8. Incredible Hulk #467 (No. 16, up 3)
9. Amazing Spider-Man #437 (No. 19, up 1)
10. Curse of the Spawn #22 (No. 15, up 1)

TOP 10 CHART DROPS

1. Marvel Universe #3 (No. 84, down 29 slots)
2. WildCORE #6 (No. 81, down 26)
3. (tie) Green Lantern #101 (No. 36, down 25)
3. (tie) Iron Fist #2 (No. 96, down 25)
5. (tie) Mage: The Hero Defined #9 (No. 91, down 15)
5. (tie) Spirit of the Tao #2 (No. 29, down 15)
7. Jim Lee's C•23 #3 (No. 71, down 14)
8. (tie) Gen^{12} #5 (No. 85, down 12)
8. (tie) Lady Death #6 (No. 78, down 12)
8. (tie) Pitt #18 (No. 79, down 12)

LOOKINGBACK



What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Batman #500 (DC)
2. Superman #82 (DC)
3. X-Men 2099 #1 (Marvel)
4. Adventures of Superman #505 (DC)
5. X-Men #25 (Marvel)
6. Plasm #1 (Defiant)
7. Deathmate Epilogue (Image)
8. Codename: Stryke Force #1 (Image)
9. Gen-X #1 (Image)
10. Second Life of Doctor Mirage #1 (Valiant)

Gen-X? But the the #9 book should be called *Generation X*, right? Wrong. Back in 1993, WildStorm solicited a book called *Gen-X* with a buncha superpowered teens. But then Marvel, protective of comics with "X" in the title, told WildStorm to cut it out. WildStorm did, and renamed the book *Gen^{13}*. It still did okay after that. You might have heard of it.

NAME GAME *Gen-X*? Nah. Try *Gen^{13}*, after a letter from Marvel arrived on the doorstep.

WIZARD
COMICS MAGAZINE #86
DAREDEVIL COVER BY
JOE QUESADA
THE TENTH
#1/2
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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Hey there, kiddies! Are you ready for some more official *Wizard* trivia-style entertainment? No? Then get ready, 'cause this month we're gonna grade your comics knowledge against irritating celebrities who deserve a sound beating for being far too annoying and pretentious. Here we go...

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*That dolphin from "seaQuest." Somebody go get us a tuna net.*
5-9	*Tiger Woods. "Tigermania"? C'mon, he plays golf. GOLF!! That, and he's funny lookin'!*
10-14	*The cast of "Veronica's Closet." We won't give them the dignity of being named. We'll just crush 'em all in a hydraulic press.*
15	*Fiona Apple. We'd run her over while eating a turkey sandwich.*

1 Merry mutie Kitty Pryde has lent her phasing powers to the X-Men, Excalibur and those faceless fascists at:
A) A.I.M.
B) S.H.I.E.L.D.
C) C.I.A.
D) N.A.M.B.L.A.

2 Robin became Nightwing. Kid Flash became Flash. What's original Teen Titan Aqualad's new name, which he shares with a failed daytime talk show?
A) Donahue
B) Carnie
C) Tempest
D) Bonaduce, the drug-addled Partridge Boy

3 If looks could kill, Cyclops...well, Cyclops could kill you anyway. Good thing he wears that visor o' his, made outta...
A) ...ruby quartz.
B) ...adamantium.
C) ...scarlet diamond.
D) ...old Valiant Vision lenses. Man, this company provides us with good material for cheap gags.

4 Last time they tried to put his adamantium back, Wolverine expelled it from his body like bad Mexican food. Too bad. What Wolvie foe just kicked the crap out of him thanks to an adamantium overhaul?
A) Dirtnap
B) Sabretooth
C) Bloodscream
D) Adam Ant. Poetic, *n'est pas*?

5 What English superhero's name is a tribute to the British flag?
A) Royal Blue
B) The Striped Soldier
C) Union Jack
D) Limey Bastard

6 That bad-ass 'bot Metallo kicks Superman's butt with maximum efficiency when he's running on:
A) Uranium-12
B) Kryptonite
C) Venom
D) Methane. *¡Viva Gorditas!*

7 Having lost control of Stark Industries, what's Iron Man's alter ego Tony Stark's latest endeavor?
A) Stark Solutions
B) Stark Corp. Ltd.
C) Stark Systems Inc.
D) Stark-naked, drunken strippers—and lots of 'em

8 Batman was a helluva lot different in the early pre-*Crisis* days. He didn't mess around; in fact, he used to solve problems real permanent-like with his trusty...
A) ...crossbow.
B) ...handgun.
C) ...broadsword.
D) ...home enema kit and steaming pot of coffee. He'd make Two-Face cry like a school girl in under two minutes.

9 Because "Great Hera!" or "Holy Hannah!" just weren't good enough, former Teen Titan Starfire used to exclaim the following...er, exclamation:
A) "X'Hal!"
B) "G'Asp!"
C) "D'Tron!"
D) "This book'd suck if Dan Jurgens ever got hold of it!"

10 Sad Comic Fact No. 1411: Green Lantern used to have an Eskimo sidekick named:
A) Yukon Cornelius
B) Pie Face
C) That Chinese-lookin' fella from up North
D) Dave

11 Who guards Asgard's Rainbow Bridge?
A) Volstaag
B) Fafnir
C) Heimdal
D) that fat guy who used to be on WKRP in Cincinnati, was the creepy child molester who made time with Dudley on "Diff'rent Strokes," and now does those Maytag commercials.

12 What does *Divine Right* star Max Faraday do for a living?
A) Tutor high school students
B) Give hockey lessons
C) Deliver pizzas
D) Draw all the art for the "Jim Lee's C•23" card game. Hey, somebody had to do it.

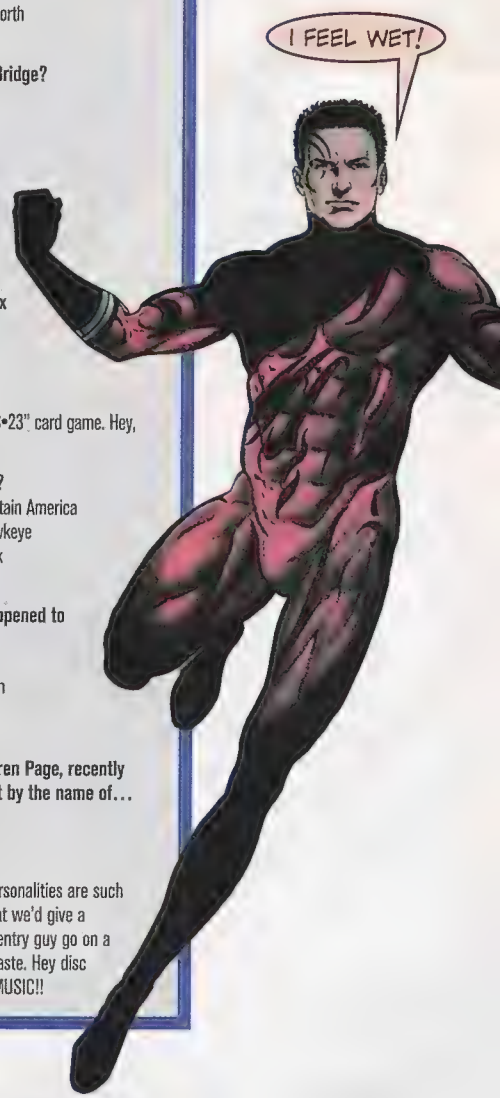
13 Who were the original Avengers?
A) Ant-Man, Wasp, Thor, Iron Man, Captain America
B) Ant-Man, Wasp, Thor, Iron Man, Hawkeye
C) Ant-Man, Wasp, Thor, Iron Man, Hulk
D) John Steed and Emma Peel

14 Which terrible event has not happened to *Preacher* baddie Starr?
A) His leg was gnawed off
B) He was caught in a nuclear explosion
C) He lost an eye
D) He had a catheter inserted

15 Daredevil's sweetie-poo-poo, Karen Page, recently landed a job as a radio talk-show host by the name of...
A) ...Misty Nights.
B) ...Paige Angel.
C) ...Karen Diablo.
D) ...who gives a rat's ass? Radio personalities are such cloying, grating, unoriginal dimwits that we'd give a month's pay to have that giant Kree Sentry guy go on a killing spree and crush them all into paste. Hey disc jockeys...JUST SHUT UP AND PLAY MUSIC!!

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...

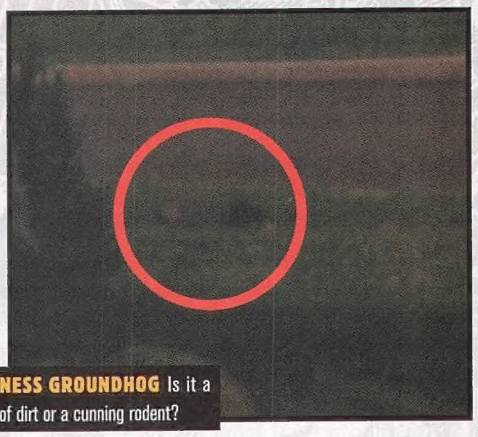


BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Groundhog Day

He's 2 feet tall, vegetarian, and inhumanly smart.

He's Eric the Groundhog, and ever since Wizard Entertainment moved its headquarters to scenic Congers, N.Y., four years ago, he has become the focus of an obsession. You see, hardly a day goes by during the spring and summer months where the chubby li'l guy isn't spotted somewhere on the lawns eating grass, waddling under bushes, or evading the herd of Nazi-like geese that inhabit the Wizard Entertainment grounds. But in all that time, despite countless attempts, no one has been able to obtain our version of the Holy Grail: a clean, in-focus, RECOGNIZABLE photo of the little bastard to print in *Wizard*. It's gotten so bad that a year ago a reward was posted for his photo. The original $25 bounty has since ballooned up to an as-yet unclaimed $200! And what kind of effect has this had on the staffers? "He tasks me..." Price Guide editor (and Eric's arch-enemy) Bob Marshall commented after yet another Wile E. Coyote-like failure to capture the groundhog on film. "He tasks me...AND I SHALL HAVE HIM!"



LOCH NESS GROUNDHOG Is it a mound of dirt or a cunning rodent?

TOP 10 highlights of the annual superhero Independence Day picnic

10 Tim Drake bursts into tears after catching a volleyball in the face.
9 Ant-Man slain by enraged Fin Fang Foom after ants spoil his chicken salad. Turns out they were just regular ants.
8 Cap's team wins like EVERY game of Frisbee football.
7 Northstar works on his all-over tan, makes people feel really weird and uncomfortable until Stingray makes him put some pants on.
6 Brother Voodoo misunderstands the party tradition and turns the piñata into a voodoo doll. Iowa resident Dave Kindle dies of numerous bludgeon wounds to the body and head.
5 Manga characters assault the beachhead.
4 Spawn shows up to have some fun and get his mind off his troubles but ends up getting beaten by police and thrown out because nobody likes bums in their parks.
3 Iron Man gets rip-roaring drunk on Rolling Rock, kills Puck.
2 Hulk eats waaaay too many deviled eggs, feels bloated, has to lie down for awhile.
1 Jim Shooter appears like a grim harbinger of doom and eats all the potato salad.

CBIQ answers...

1. B	4. B	7. A	10. B	13. C
2. C	5. C	8. B	11. C	14. D
3. A	6. B	9. A	12. C	15. B

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

Gedalias Donato WAREHOUSE MANAGER

WHY WE PAY HIM: "I handle all the maintenance [changing light bulbs, painting walls, fixing desks and chairs, some plumbing, etc.], do the shipping and packing, and try to do some cleaning, but never finish."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "Buddy, I'm going to screw you." (In reference to hanging up a bulletin board for online editor Buddy Scalera.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "I was told to paint the *Wizard* warehouse floor green to look like grass and put umbrellas on the tables in the lunch area, so it'd seem like you're eating outside."

SCAR ON HEAD: "I fell off the back of a pickup and landed on my head. I woke up 10 minutes later in an ambulance."

PUERTO RICAN FLAG: "I lived in Puerto Rico until I was 19. I came here speaking little English except for 'Looking for a job.' "

BOW: "If it moves, I'll shoot it. I love hunting. Bows, guns, skeet shooting, you name it."

MOTORCYCLE HELMET: "In Puerto Rico, I once outran the cops on my motorcycle."

DONATO

SHI: "I read every issue. I love everything that has to do with martial arts and motorcycles."

KNIFE: "I always carry my survival knife with me. To hunt...and to cut boxes in the warehouse."

ITCHING CREAM: "On my first trip to the San Diego Comic Con, I got chicken pox the day after I got there."

HELICOPTER: "Back in Puerto Rico, I'd fish with my dad on a military base and get chased out by helicopters and jeeps. We never got caught."

VIDEO GAMES: "I steal quarters from little kids. I own an arcade called Donato's Place."

WEIGHTS: "The most I ever bench pressed in exercise was 310 pounds."

NUTS AND BOLTS: "Show me a big machine and I'll work it. I've got a diploma in industrial machine operation."

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRADI

TIME TRAVEL by RUSSELL LISSAU

DAYS OF THUNDER

Lightning strikes for Marvel as fans storm to Thor

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby hit a snag. After the phenomenal success of *Fantastic Four* in 1961 and *The Incredible Hulk* in the spring of 1962, the duo needed to excite Marvel Comics' readers with a new hero. They'd already taken superheroes to the next level with such interesting, believable characters as Bruce Banner and Reed Richards, so where could they go from there?

Try Scandinavia's mythological heavens.

"I spoke to Jack Kirby," Lee recalled, "and I said, 'What's next but a god?'"

But Lee and Kirby wanted something unique—not another Greek or Roman hero. Inspiration finally struck in the form of lightning, as Lee picked the hammer-wielding Norse God of Thunder, Thor. Kirby then clothed the character in a vivid cape, boots and helmet.

Thor debuted in *Journey Into Mystery* #83, dated August 1962, a series that previously offered up only science fiction and horror stories. Lee wrote the book with his brother, Larry Lieber, complementing Kirby's pencils. Like many other early Marvel heroes, Thor's alter-ego was an ordinary man with limitations. While hiding out from alien invaders, the handicapped Dr. Don Blake discovered an ancient cane. The frustrated Blake struck the gnarled stick against a boulder, triggering an incredible transformation. The branch instantly became the magical hammer Mjolnir and the all-powerful Thor was reborn. With his newfound strength and abilities, Thor defeated the aliens, eventually earned his way into the superhero fold, and even became a charter member of the Avengers in 1963.

Unfortunately, *Journey* wasn't as big a success as *Fantastic Four*. Why? Well, it could be because a certain friendly, neighborhood Spider-Man debuted the same month, overshadowing the thunder god. Or it could have just been because Thor lacked his own title, as Lee believes. That changed in 1966, though, when *Journey* was renamed *Thor* with issue #126.

The series offered many things unseen in comics at the time. Lee changed the way superheroes talk, incorporating such Shakespearean words as "mayhap," "verily" and "thou" in Thor's dialogue. "I loved writing that kind of stuff," he said. "I hate characters who talk like everybody else."

Kirby and Lee began introducing more elements from Norse mythology, adding to the fantasy flavor. Readers learned about Asgard, the home of the gods, connected to Midgard (Earth) by the Rainbow Bridge; the Midgard Serpent, an evil creature expected to kill Thor during the twilight of the gods known as Ragnarok; Odin, the king of the gods and Thor's father; and Loki, Thor's evil foster brother, who became one of Marvel's greatest villains.

Kirby left *Thor* in 1970, Lee the next year. Roughly 25 years later, the series ended when Thor made the ultimate sacrifice to defeat Onslaught, and disappeared into the "Heroes Reborn" universe with his fellow Avengers. But now Thor's back with a new series, a new alter-ego, and his first #1 issue. Those are facts, not fantasy. And so another journey begins, with only one tale yet told: Will lightning strike again?

DATELINE

AUGUST 1962

A pre-"Partridge Family" Shirley Jones starred with Robert Preston in **"The Music Man,"** which would later win the Academy Award for Best Picture (musical).... Kids and adults alike tuned in to **"The Bullwinkle Show"** Sunday nights on its new network, NBC.... **"The Loco-Motion"** by Little Eva knocked Neil Sedaka's "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do" off the top of the charts.... **Marilyn Monroe** was found naked and dead of a barbiturate overdose in her Los Angeles home at age 36.

MARILYN MONROE

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A genocidal war

A man betrayed

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CANINE HOUSEKEEPER

A useful guide to training your dog to do all the things you don't want to do.

Just like humans, some dogs are smarter than others. (In fact, some dogs are smarter than some humans. You can probably think of a few examples yourself.) So hang in there if your pet turns out to be some sort of canine lamebrain.

LESSON 1: GARBAGE REMOVAL

COMMAND	ACTION
"Grab"	Instruct your canine to grab the bag at its opening to avoid a major tear.
"Carry"	Then, be sure he lifts and carries it off the ground. Don't drag the bag.
"Deposit"	Finally, it needs to go "in" the can. Not "on" it. Not "near" it. Inside it.

If your canine just can't figure it out, try putting the bag in your mouth and demonstrating it for him. **HINT:** this is best done when no one else is watching.

LESSON 2: TIDYING UP

After garbage removal this should be a snap. Just be sure your pooch knows the difference between a garbage can and a clothes hamper. If not, you could end up short of underwear.

ADVANCED LESSON: AUTO CLEANING

This should be attempted with hounds of exceptional intellect and dexterity, only. If your canine is a bit of a putz, don't even waste the time trying to teach this one.

Bonus Reward

LESSON 3: PULLING WEEDS

Weed "YES"

Flower "NO"

Dogs don't have a green thumb (heck, they don't have a thumb of any kind). Therefore, you need to help them distinguish between a weed and a flower. If you don't, well, let's put it this way, your mutt won't be the only one living in the proverbial doghouse.

TRAINING TIPS

1 Reward a task well done:

A). A few of these are ample reward for first-time success.

B). Give this tasty morsel when he consistently comes through.

C). Lay this on him when he does a chore without being asked.

D). Just kidding.

2 Provide frequent rest periods:

Keep in mind that every year of yo life equals seven dog years. So you hound is working some really long hours:

Chore	Your time	In dog years
Empty garbage	4 min.	28 min.
Tidy up room	45 min.	5 hrs., 15 min.
Pulling weeds	4 hrs.	1 day, 4 hrs.

3 Relax and enjoy your free time:

- Sit in the bathtub and get all wrinkly.
- Prove the existence of extraterrestrial life.
- Practice juggling corndogs.

DISCLAIMER - In the event you don't own a dog we do not recommend substituting any of the following: a hamster (too small), a turtle (too slow), a rattlesnake (too poisonous), a dinosaur (too extinct). However, if you have a little brother, all of the ideas shown here definitely do apply.

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